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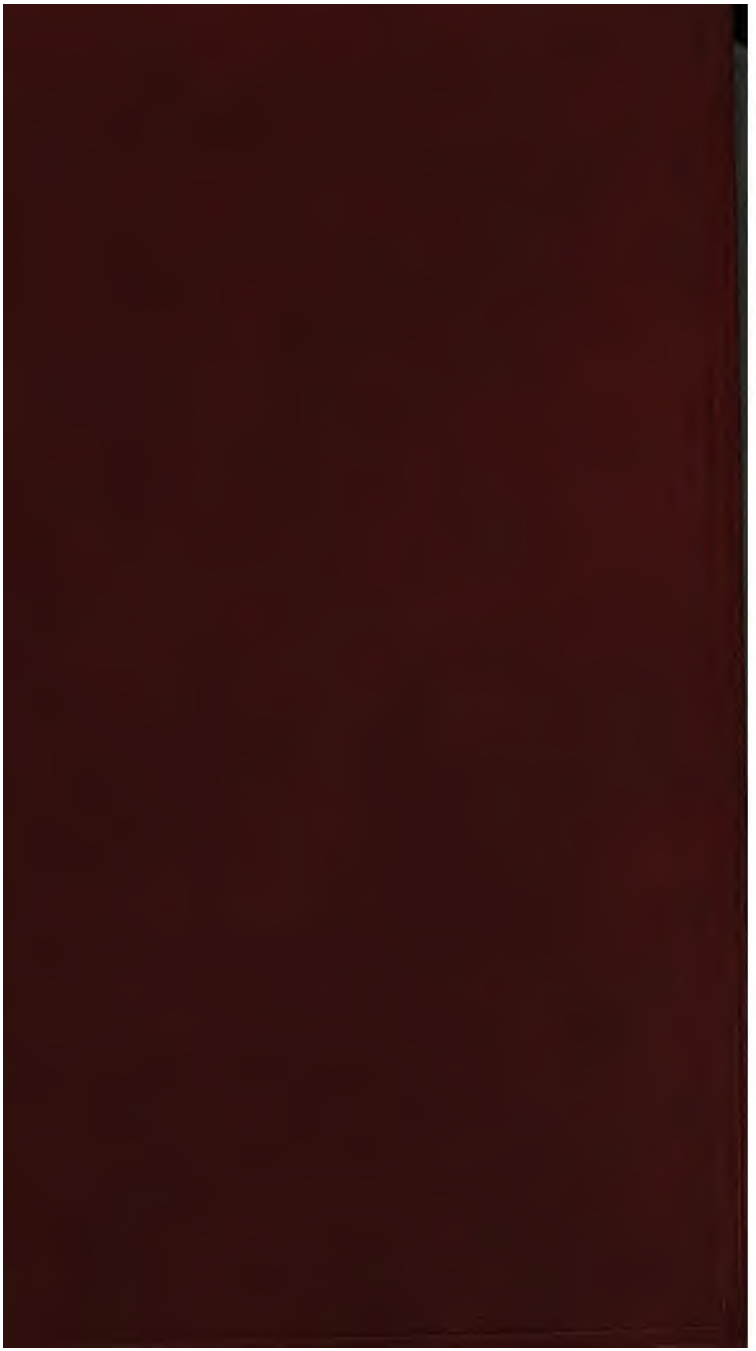

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The Mystery of the Passion

OF OUR

MOST HOLY REDEEMER

The Mystery of the Passion

OF OUR

MOST HOLY REDEEMER

BY THE REV.

W. J. KNOX LITTLE, M.A.

RECTOR OF ST. ALBAN'S, MANCHESTER, AND CANON RESIDENTIARY OF WORCESTER

"Mors Christi mors mortis mihi"

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I dedicate this Volume

TO

HENRY PARRY LIDDON, D.D.

Canon Residentiary of St. Paul's, and Ireland Professor in the University of Oxford

(TO WHOSE EXPRESSED DESIRE IT OWES ITS EXISTENCE)

IN LOVING RECOGNITION OF MANY ACTS OF AFFECTION AND KINDNESS

AND

AS A SLENDER MARK OF ADMIRATION AND RESPECT

FOR HIS GOODNESS AND GENIUS

PREFACE.

THESE Sermons were preached *extempore*, and without a thought of their publication. The first five were attempts to present, in the few moments available at the midday Lenten services in St. Paul's Cathedral, some of the more prominent lessons arising out of the Passion of our Redeemer. The remaining five were preached for the most part in Manchester, and are more or less connected with the same solemn subject. They have been *recovered* by means of reports more or less complete, notes taken on the spot, and such records as have been supplied by the author's own memory and that of others. The substance is preserved, even, in places, at the cost of repetition, and, when possible, it is clothed in the actual words.

The author has published this volume because it is believed by dear friends (by one in particular, whose opinion he could not fail to respect) that it will be of use.

He is painfully alive to the inadequacy of his treatment of so great a theme; but he hopes that he has not anywhere been untrue to the Revelation of this Mystery, as handed down by the Church of Christ; and he will indeed be thankful if the words which God has permitted him to speak can bring more vividly before any soul the image of the Great Ideal, or revive the fainting hope of the heavy laden by pointing to the Precious Blood.

St. Alban's Rectory, Cheetwood, Manchester:
July 22, 1881.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

IN looking through this volume at his publisher's request, before the issue of a new edition, the author has only corrected a few obvious misprints, and re-written one short passage where, in the former edition, a wrong sense had been conveyed.

He takes this opportunity of thanking many in America and at home (to whom he has no other way of conveying his acknowledgments) for the kind words written to him about this book.

He is thankful that, by even so slender an effort as this, he has been allowed, in God's goodness, to help some souls towards a truer trust in the merits of the Crucified, and to a stronger desire for approach to that greatest of ideals, "Conformity to His Death."

CASTLE POINT, HOBOKEN, NEW JERSEY, U.S.A.,
January 30, 1882.

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SERMON I.

THE MYSTERY OF HUMILIATION

The Mystery of Humiliation.

He emptied Himself of His glory, "and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."—PHILIPPIANS ii. 7, 8.

IT is, my brothers, with no ordinary sense of awe, no common kindling of delight, that once again before this vast audience I am allowed to approach the Passion of the Lord. On no other topic would you endure that I should speak to you now; on none other at such a season could I endure to speak. Why should we wish it otherwise? For over eighteen centuries this one subject has provoked passionate devotion or unsoftened scorn. It has affected in a thousand ways the society of civilized thought; it has ever demanded and unfailingly received some tribute from the reserved and shrouded realms of human feeling; at the lowest, indeed, and however far the obliterating centuries have swept on, it has won the homage of unsated astonishment and constantly reawakened awe. This is the wide witness to its unrivalled claim on the attention and interest of man.

True, but it provokes thoughts more piercing, more practical still. The eye that glides across the grey and glimmering expanses of a quiet summer sea fails to strike the horizon line, so heavy is the drapery of haze; one moment it is scanning the common levels, another it is unconsciously climbing the clouds, so closely blent in inextricable unity are the wide sea reaches and the ascents of sky. Thus it is with the drama of the Crucifixion. Like all themes of truly universal interest, the thoughts which spring from that most blessed yet most tremendous tragedy lead the soul to the highest objects of contemplation, but never, never lose their hold on common life.

For think, my brothers, as years go on, and Time is doing its sure, sad work amongst us, deeper, surely deeper in our souls is a sharp and piteous sense of weakness, and yet—for we are Christians—a certainty of needed help; and within our hearts the yearning love of *the* ideal of human nobleness, the longing for the fairest of the fair.

In that sharp sense of weakness, in that deep and earnest yearning, in that quiet certainty of assistance found sometime, somewhere, in the life of each of us, lives the truest witness to the eternal value of the Mystery of the Passion.

I use my words advisedly. For you may approach the story of the Sorrows of Jesus either as an historical fact *or* as a *mystery*. The first method is more objec-

tive, perhaps therefore less selfish, and is better suited to the devotions of the Holy Week; but the second, which now is mine, has a dignity all its own. It leads us from the history to its meaning, from the fact to its power; and further, for us poor human creatures it has this attraction, it touches *ourselves.*

In the first, our Master and the brutal circumstances of His cruel execution take their place in the series of the events of Time. In the second, Time and its restraining limitations are torn to ribbons; we realize the greatness of our unfettered lives, like unhindered fancies in the fairy palaces of childhood we move—only here it is no fancy, but a fact—*the* fact I dare to phrase it—we move in Eternity.

Thus, then, I deal with the philosophy of the history (not with the history itself), of that stupendous tragedy—the Passion of the Lord. The subject is boundless, the time is short—we can but touch here and there a striking truth; and yet these are not unassociated points, but rather prominent links in a series lending each its force to construct a chain by which the soul of the creature is, or may be bound in intimate affection to the very life of the Creator.

I.

Well then, I have two remarks to make as we cross the frontier of our subject.

The first is this: Beware, I beseech you, of that constant confusion of thought whereby men, and especially Englishmen, are led to imagine that by mystery is meant an unreality or a dream. There is in this notion a fallacy all too attractive to what is stupidly imagined to be "the practical understanding," that is, in fact, the understanding wilfully limiting the range of its activity to the trifles of Time. The dupe of this fallacy settles steadily down into materialistic methods of thought; indeed the confusion arises from materialism, as if *that* only were fact which can be touched or seen. But, whatever it comes from, it makes short work of the Christian Faith. By it Christianity becomes, not a revelation, but a philosophy; Christ is no wiser than Socrates; man learns to walk by sight and not by faith, and to accept as an axiom that wildest insult to the experiences of his immortal spirit, the notion, namely, that *that* only is truth worthy of attention which is cognizable by perception and guaranteed by the faculties of sense.

In days like these of presumptuous irreverence and failing faith, it is never difficult to win a cheap and passing triumph by denouncing mystery. The life, the death, the risen action, the ascended glory of our Blessed Master; the solemn certainties of His teachings on the destiny of the soul, the awful and consoling fact of His constant Presence under the Sacramental Symbols,—these are capable of being emptied of one-half

their value by what is called, in a misnomer, "a common-sense religion." Mystery is the characteristic tone or atmosphere of the Incarnation from its first manifestation at Bethlehem to its latest witness in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar; mystery is nothing else but *fact* translated into the language of Eternity. Now this, my brothers, I would have you steadily remember as we approach the overmastering but consoling truths of the Passion.

And my second observation is this:—

The *power* of the Sacrifice is constant, it affects the Divine life in its relation to man; but its *application* must be individual, and dependent upon our dispositions of soul, that is, our several responses to the action of God's grace. We are saved, let us remember it, not in crowds or mobs or congregations, but soul by soul. To each, yes, to *each* of us, it is of personal importance.

And what is more. The old tower at Bologna stands unshaken in its steadfast strength, but to the eye of Dante it took a solemn rhythmic movement from the motion of the sweeping clouds. According as your eye or mine is open to the cloudy circumstance of a life of sun and shadow, we do not change indeed the supernatural power of the Passion, but we *do* gather that teaching which it brings; we *do* see it in its strange prevailing personal relation to ourselves, in the individual movement and colouring which reveals its dignity and its meaning thus to each passing pilgrim who has

his own single unrepeated journey to pursue through the valley of the shadow.

Each Christian life is emphasized by this. Oh! I would, then, that you would share with me the sense of awe, the feeling of delight, in standing once more front to front with the Crucified.

II.

And now to sketch in most shadowy and slender outline one feature of the philosophy of the Cross. There is one broad fact which I desire to impress here and now. Like the sweeping dashes of darkness in Rembrandt's pictures, it brings out the meaning and it gives solemnity to the whole. Whatever else it was, it was a *Mystery of Humiliation*,—on this Scripture, on this, the Church is clear,—of humiliation also voluntarily endured.

St. Paul's striking words are a summarized analysis of the moral steps of a Divine descent from glory to the grave. They cover worlds of thought. We can but touch their meaning now. That meaning (if not in exact quotation from our version) is at least fairly given in my reading of the text—"Emptied Himself of glory," "became obedient to death, even the death of the cross." What, in a measure at least, does the Apostle mean?

Think of man. Man, it has been said somewhere, is

God's great achievement, because in him are summarized and reasserted the majestic mysteries of two worlds. Nothing more perfect than his form has presented itself as a model for the artist's chisel, for its dignity and beauty consist in this, that it perfectly represents and expresses an undying spirit. Let Death touch with its destructive finger that frail and beautiful tenement of clay, no more does the infinite affection of a spirit flash from the eyes, or the force of unbending purpose play in the nervous hands. The door of the spirit-world is closed; man is "emptied of his glory."

Think of God—God of inexhaustible resource, and gifted with one proud ignorance, the ignorance of the sense of need. God, infinite in His awful Oneness, and yet rich as the teeming life of illimitable worlds, before the dazzling beauty of Whose perfections the fairest facts and sweetest scenes of loveliness, in a world of moral and material glory, fade as the emptiness of a dream. Think of Him—for an instant if you can—taking to Himself the perfection and the weakness of that Human Nature, laying aside the unstinted blessedness of His attributes of glory, and then even the life and warmth of His pure and adopted manhood, and descending to the agony of a degrading death. You say, "Here at least is a witness to some awful truth, *this* I cannot afford to disregard." Such is the force of this broad view of the subject; such is the appeal of the Mystery of Humiliation.

Not disregarding it, what does it teach?

Three truths. Think them out for yourself.

1. The sun may shed a shimmer on the sea; the sky may sleep in calmest beauty behind the serried mountains of the clouds; the heather blooming in the uplands may dream in the hot afternoon haunted by the humming of the bee; the grass may murmur to the caressing wind across the heights and hollows of the breezy down; the little flower may smile, at its awakening, responsive to the laughter of the dawn; the sweet song of childhood, or its merriest laugh, may say to the saddest, "Faith hope, love, innocence, and joy." Ah! true, the world is glad and beautiful; ah! too true, also, there is storm and darkness, howling tempest, chilling death. Across the sunlight is a shadow black as the midnight. Man has sinned. Which of you, who is sane, denies it? But that sin is *the* giant evil, that it were better anything, yes, anything, my brother, than that you should fix your will in rebellion against the Source of life and love; that is the teaching of the Mystery of Humiliation.

2. It teaches the foundation of all moral greatness, that is, humility. The old-world Humility, even the greatest, was "founded in self-love, supported by Pride." Christ crucified says this, "Would you know? would you advance? would you achieve? One way, the emptying of self even to the limits of a death of shame."

3. It reminds that there is hope, and, amidst all our

sorrows, there is encouragement. Things are not what they seem. To look through nature on to God; to see in every check, in every sorrow, in every trouble bravely borne a certain step of advancing to a better world—this is the proud possibility of the Christian who has grasped the teaching of the Cross. Is it yours? Oh! let it be. Take courage and endure.

In the modern museum which occupies the site of what was once the Roman Capitol there is one room which those who enter never forget. In the centre is the saddest and most powerful of ancient sculptures, "The Dying Gladiator;" on one side is the Faun of Praxiteles, on another the Lycian Apollo: two other statues arrest the attention less, but are not unworthy, the one is the bust of the assassin of Cæsar, the other (which illustrates my meaning now) the imaged mystery of the human soul—the child clasping the dove of innocence, and attracted by the serpent of sin. The old world felt and stereotyped that constant struggle. The Incarnate Conqueror has taught the power of conquest, but only by emphasizing the severity of the conflict. That conflict must be ours. Beautiful is the soul of the creature, possible its victory, but certain its trial. Such, such surely for warning and encouragement, is the serious and unchanging lesson of the Passion of the Lord.

SERMON II.

THE MYSTERY OF SORROW

The Mystery of Sorrow.

"*He is . . . a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief.*"
—ISAIAH liii. 3.

THE Passion is a mystery as well as a fact; or rather, it is a mystery because it is a fact, a fact of boundless significance, taking its place and gaining its dignity from the infinite realities of an eternal world. Its full reach and meaning are clothed in darkness; like the shadows on the mountains, like the careering clouds, covering or unveiling the hill-side or the sky, it half reveals and half conceals the solemn certainties of the destiny of man.

As a mystery of humiliation it teaches so much at least as this: (1) The awfulness of sin, the need, the pressing, the imperious need in our mortal conflict to act with a spirit wide awake to the startling contrasts and confusions in a great and ruined world. Again, (2) the necessity of being in some real sense emptied of self if we are to know God; in other words, the fundamental value of the grace of humility. And further (3), the solemn responsibility involved in the power

of choice in the creature, to be exercised with a just recollection of the fact that *that* is not always best which is brightest,—"that the best is yet to be." What then?

Well, humiliation is, after all, in a sense at least, external; even if humility be, as it is, a grace, that is, a divinely-assisted attitude of the soul.

The humiliation of the Crucified consisted in the descent from Eternity to Death, although it showed the Divine humility of the Son of God. But the Cross was more. It was the crowning close of an awful human experience, appropriated, possessed, interpreted by eternal God. We advance from something possibly external, nearer the shrine.

I stood once before the western door of one of the great cathedrals of Europe after the death of a great, good man. Outside was the burning blue of summer, outside were the flecks of passing cloud, outside were the song of the workman and the gay voice of the child. We entered: the stately columns were draped in mourning, and the organ pealed a funeral dirge. Now, that is like the human heart. There is plenty of sunshine, and abundance of sweet sound, the world indeed is very fair, and there are days of joy so exquisite and hope so glowing that earth is heaven—else how could we go faring on?—but with all that, alas! the rain of burning tears falls thicker than showers on an April day. Man's soul is a temple of trouble, the whispers that wander through

its innermost recesses are too often, all too often, the music of mourning and the dirges of death. Therefore, my brothers, this teaching of the Cross is blessed—the Passion is a Mystery of Sorrow.

I.

What is sorrow? I am struck dumb for an answer. Define life in its throb of ecstasy; define your thrill of joy at the vision of the dear fond face of a friend; define the sense of awe that enfolds our souls at the war of the tempest and the shrieking of the storm; define the feeling of mystery, the unspoken cry of the spirit with a yearning of infinite desire, at the beat of the billows from the illimitable ocean as it rolls wave after wave on the resounding shore. Define these experienced facts of our being, so may you define the mystery of tears. "Tears, idle tears, I know not what ye mean." Ah, false! you *do* know, though you may not define. To some of you—God help you!—sorrow may be as yet a sentiment, a pretty touching thought, and nothing more; but soon it changes, years go on, "friend after friend departs," face after face known and loved fades from the circle of sunshine in which we stand into the belt of darkness that surrounds this mortal life, then—define it or not—sorrow we know as a grim reality.

Well, I am powerless to define, but you may give precision to a great idea in three ways—

1. Consider its relation to man. In the light of this thought, "what is sorrow?" There are facts which know no frontiers. The passing procession of the travelling clouds, the light persistence of the busy breeze, the pathetic mystery of dawn, the tender sweetness of the closing day—these are Nature's voices, pictures, heralds rather, they admit no national divisions, they respect no boundaries. "He maketh His sun to shine upon the evil and the good, and sendeth His rain on the just and the unjust." They come, they go, to man as man.

Now in the inner life of thought and feeling such is sorrow. It is a *universal language*, it obliterates Space, it annihilates Time; it is the great leveller, it ignores rank, it stands head and shoulders above any dignity. Separated by all else, yet speaking *this* strange, powerful tongue, we understand one another.

> "Brother clasps the hand of brother,
> Stepping fearless through the night."

The cry, "O Absalom, my son, my son!" bridges the chasm of a thousand years, and places the Shepherd-King of Judah side by side with the last heart-broken mourner in London, as well as with the poor French mother weeping for her dead Imperial boy.

Sorrow! Think again, it is too sacred to be *only* universal. Strange—yet true, because of man's greatness as well as his ruin—strange, so common a thing

should be so sacred! Why sacred? Because it is also an *intimate fact.* Most intimate! This makes it awful!

Can *I* define to *you* the exact brilliance of beauty round a dear and blessed memory which doubles the oppressive darkness in the sad feeling it is *only* a memory, that here at least, in *presence* we never meet again?

Can I convey to you precisely the poignancy of pang piercing my heart at the thought that never again can this hand rest upon that curly head bent down for blessing, never again feel that strong young grasp, speaking the mystery of abiding love, or see that fair young face upturned to mine to ask, "What is my duty?" Can I convey what it means to me to say that this, all this, can be no more? Can *I* to *you?* Can *you* to *me?* I trow not. Too deep, too sacred is this human heart!

Why did the tribune on the Capitol cover his face with his hands, and burst into an agony of unspoken woe? Why, when that friend of yours was carried to his last long rest, did you gaze into the open grave with the determined stillness of an unmoved face, or with merely the tribute of your voiceless tears? Why did the little street-boy I tried to comfort the other day only shake his head and turn away in unexplained despair? "O sorrow, cruel fellowship!" Fellowship indeed! "Yes," you say, "for it is universal." Ah! if you seek to comfort by that truth you are met by another. Comfort such as that is

"Vacant chaff well meant for grain,"

because sorrow is—*your* sorrow is, or will be, be sure, my brother—an *intimate fact*. None can comfort. No, it is no use blinking the fact. There may be sweet help, deep and real sympathy, not comfort, no, for none can undo the tragic truth. Yes, there is One. One can come nearest to the feeling, and, in our eternal life, in a sense He can undo. One, only One, has gathered up the representative experiences of all. O blessed revelation of the mystery of the Passion, "the Man of Sorrows"!

2. What is sorrow? Define we cannot, but the thought gains precision when we remember that it bears a witness for God. Let thunder-cloud meet thunder-cloud and you have the lightning flash; let the mists creep across the moonlight and you have the neutral tint of the sad grey night; forces meet and at least *affect* each other, and the effect bears exact resemblance to the cause. Well, let Love meet Death or Trouble, and the result is Sorrow.

This noblest human sorrow so begotten is a witness to the source of its being. Love, the love of the creature, is his highest endowment from the Love of God. Hence a lesson. My brother, I hope you have learned and noticed how God *hates* heartlessness. The Bible is full of this teaching from end to end. The kid is not to be seethed in its *mother's* milk; so much for the testimony of requirement of a stern, unbending law. Then as to character; Jacob is crafty, prudent, persevering, but the nobleness of his nature appears in his

persistent devotion to the maiden of his choice through years of labour, and his unfailing memory, in his own closing days, of the dear wife whom he had buried on the Bethlehem road, and whose death had darkened the skies of his pilgrimage with a dash of unrelenting shadow. Ruth is beautiful in her constancy to Naomi; Rizpah, in her ghastly watch, indifferent to the scorching heat of day, and careless of the drenching dews of night, guarding the dead bodies of the sons whom in life she had loved, is a moving picture of faithful devotedness; Paul, the great heart of Paul is shaken to his last hour, when Stephen's fair and blood-stained face takes form before his memory, shaken with a spasm of sorrow, "I was consenting to his death."

Young man, remember to be heartless is never to be manly, for selfishness is *always* the attribute of the weak. God hates heartlessness. The brave man may be quick in speech or rough in manner, but if there is true nobleness, be sure the heart is "in the right place." Call this not sentiment—remember how the witness comes. We English are almost madly reticent; we cannot carry our hearts upon our sleeves. Well, but there is nothing noble in taking care to have no hearts to beat in our breasts; recollect that "without natural affection" is a sign of the latter times, a mark not of sorrow-laden yet struggling, but of debased and abandoned sinners.

The teaching goes deep. In view of the Passion, learn to guard a *pure* if you would keep a *loving* heart; love is killed by impure desire, which is in fact completed selfishness—*that* God hates. David angered God, the Pharisees called down the curse of Christ—why? By reason of their brutal heartlessness, they "had no pity."

Man has no real supremacy above the brute, except in forgetting self for others. I can observe facts and register results; I can admire order, virtue, beauty; I can contemplate the dignity of the universe and the greatness of the race. I can go farther: I can show practical ability, accumulate wealth, gain a position, build up a name; but I am an abject soul with a debasing philosophy until I forget myself in love (alas! therefore in grief) for another. We are brutes, pre-eminently brutes, we Englishmen, until we learn this lesson; face to face with the Cross of Our Redeemer, we are in view of the lofty morality of a loving heart. O great Pattern of human nobleness, tender and strong! He—the best, the greatest—was "a Man of Sorrows."

3. What is sorrow? Again we must explain, not define. Sorrow gains a clearer outline to its frail and misty form as seen in its relation to what is called the "scheme of redemption;" seen, that is, in its place in the awakening and restoring of the human spirit, great though fallen. Sorrow here is a power.

It takes varying tints; at the darkest, it is a power of warning, of prophecy.

A powerful romance writer of the New World draws a picture of a heroine whose steps are dogged by a haunting figure. In the narrow passages of the Catacombs, and under the arches of the Flavian Amphitheatre, suddenly, surely, he is there. In the mellow sunsets on the Hartz Mountains, among the interspaces of the moaning forest, the lonely mountaineer imagines giant figures passing solemnly through the branches with soundless tread. These are the messengers of some unknown trouble. Now sorrow is that giant figure, that masked and muffled spectre; it warns of a stern reality in this world—the dreadfulness of sin.

Ah! better, it is a power to transfigure. What slaughters sin? who is the David to kill *this* Goliath? Turn to yourself. What is *your* sin, my brother? Does it haunt? At times at least does it scare? It is, indeed it is, the one ghastly fact of your life. That first permission of an evil which has grown and grown till it has overshadowed all—what can strike, can conquer it? The answer is, the majesty of sorrow. O broken heart, thou art a power of victory! Repentance is the one path to pardon, and it is a certain path. Whence comes true repentance? It comes from God's love seen in fairest, saddest image in "the Man of Sorrows."

It is a power to purify. Sorrow sends you in on self. Godless sorrow would make self more selfish, "working

death;" not so sorrow from the Cross of Christ. We are apt to give account of politics, of literature, of social trifles, of our neighbour's character—of everything under the sun—*except* the fact of first importance: the day is coming, coming quickly, when we must give account of ourselves. Anticipate that day of truth in searchings of heart, true, unrelenting, complete, made in thorough earnestness, and manly effort to correct what is wrong, of which the true force and spring is the love of the Man of Sorrows. A life searched out, repented of, is a spirit purified.

II.

One word more. Look as we may upon it, life, human life, is dashed with patches of saddening shadow, even though there be the sunlight of love. Like the great chasm of the mountain, above is the canopy of cloudless glory, but below the blackness of torrent-haunted gloom. Look as we may at it, life is an awful, an absorbing reality. Are we here only to work, to suffer, and to die? Do these infinite yearnings, these voiceless aspirations, these passionate affections find their end, their meaning, only in the grave? O Christ of the five Wounds, no, not so!

We are here to learn a lesson. Learn it; it may be terrible, but it is true. We are here to be trained

through struggle to perfection. Sin is dark, ruinous, terrible; it must, it *shall* be conquered. There is a majesty in sorrow. Repentance is the *life*-work of the sinner. There is no repentance in the grave.

And yet it is not mere hard, inhuman struggle. True, I have said it, no other heart can *precisely* feel your pang. But yet that pang was needed, and to train for eternity; to live, yes, to live through sin or bereavement, ye need resignation as well as repentance; and that surely becomes possible as we see in the mystery of sorrow the sympathy of Christ.

The "Man of Sorrows," then, preaches *this* sermon. The God of grace is also the God of nature. Christ feels for you in your misery, your heartbreak, even your sin; He yearns, my brother, for your affection, He responds with His unstinted love. The very heathen dreamed of this consolation of the Cross—

"Haud ignara mali miseris succurrere disco."

Translate it into the language of the Passion: "Able to think of you, able to feel for you, able to sympathize, able to save."

SERMON III.

THE MYSTERY OF SUFFERING

The Mystery of Suffering.

"*That I may know Him, . . . and the fellowship of His sufferings, that I may be conformed to His death.*"—PHILIPPIANS iii. 10.

THE mystery of the Passion implies, involves, and certifies one chief central supernatural truth. That is indeed its great revelation, the important outcome of its power. Of that I must speak to you another day.

But—never forgetting that—let us also remember that it touches man in many ways evident to all, undeniable by the mind most hostile to Christianity, from its effect upon the deepest expressions of his being. For art, philosophy, poetry, history have met, united, taken tone and colour (like the convictions of Constantine on the Milvian Bridge) from the solemn vision of the Cross.

Thus we are furnished with an example, an example which we must at least strive by grace to follow. The mystery of humiliation glorifies humility. Again, in the mystery of sorrow we have deep and serious teaching; but above all there is comfort in trial, for here is

opened to us the only real consolation; that mystery guarantees to us the sympathy of Christ.

Thus the Cross looms out before us, as a lofty headland from surrounding gloom, gaining power from each new light thrown upon its meaning, and thus asserting and accentuating its truth.

I.

But it is more than example, more than comfort. As we approach nearer the central revelation, one further aspect is evident—it supplies an ideal.

What is an ideal? To answer that I ask a further question, What is an *idea?* An idea is a fact stripped of the adventitious circumstances and limiting accidents of life. To realize an idea is to rise from the particular to the general, to break away, in some sort, from the bonds and trammels of Space and Time.

Now an *ideal* is a representative idea. To have such before the mind implies our possessing an idea of what *ought* to be, beyond and above what *is*, and it is fruitful thus, it stimulates the conscience and the effort towards one path of progress as intrinsically and *per se* of higher and truer claim than another.

An ideal is a standard of excellence beyond which nothing can be desired; something almost tangible, really objective and distinct, from which the merely

accidental, the depressing presence of the commonplace, is gone.

A modern and popular school of philosophy has professedly got rid of the ideal; it is rigid in its devotion to observed fact, but nevertheless—so great is the dignity of man—even then such thinkers are forced to speak of happiness not merely as a fact of observation, but as—according to their theory—*the* truly desirable object, that is, in truth, an ideal.

Yes—dwell for a moment on the fact—the desire for an ideal is a witness to man's essential greatness; and the rise of the ideal is the tide-mark of his spiritual advance. This is made evident by a glance at the nations before Christ came as the "Light of the world." The vocation of the Greeks was to exalt the ideal. This thought fixes the eye on what was really noble in their Religion and Art. They worshipped what was *beautiful*, as the Hebrews worshipped what was *true;* but we form a most inadequate conception of their meaning if we imagine this the mere result of exuberant fancy, or a selfish and sensuous appetite for pleasure. No, in their best time at least, it was the witness of a real glow from the Presence, a ray from the "Light that lighteneth every man that cometh into the world."

No mean standard either. It was, for instance, the glory of the school of Phidias that *their* ideal was the strength and splendour of the Athene of the Acropolis. The soft luxuriousness of Aphrodite was to such men

worse than nothing, unless in that powerful form combining lofty love with strength and beauty, the Aphrodite Ourania placed by the great master in the Ceramicus at Athens.

But forgive me. That by the way. However, to have an ideal is in some sort to ennoble life. Nothing, my brother, nothing can be more dreary or debasing than to drift through life without one. True, it implies here the absence of complete satisfaction; better so, is not that a condition of real progress? Here, indeed, in moral and spiritual things, you are well aware that, like asymptotes in the world of mathematics, you may approach it indefinitely, but never accurately reach. But at least the approach is pleasant, though it cost, as it often *does* cost, blood and life. Ah, me! it is like the joy after a night of sorrow in the first grey glimpse of the dawn; it is like the first familiar glance at well-known objects after a lingering absence from your home; it at least implies large views, eyes wide open to facts of infinite value and eternal beauty; it is the evidence that you have in possession an invaluable treasure. What is that, my brother? Nothing else but a great ambition, the ambition to be better.

Surely, surely that is something, for indeed your own great living poet says, and truly—

> "A man's reach should exceed his grasp,
> Or what's a heaven for?"

II.

Now this need for a Christian is supplied—so to speak, at its highest power—by the Passion of Jesus as a Mystery of Suffering.

What is suffering? Need I ask that question of those who with frail bodies, perilously endowed with acute sensibilities, are swelling the long procession to the grave? If I ask it, I find myself again floundering in the waves of definition. My brother, you know it, alas! well enough to save me from delay.

Some may have thought me yesterday the victim of sentiment when I spoke of sorrow. Possibly, for some there may be, there must be, among you who have known no real sorrow. If we touch that mystery young, we are apt—some natures are—rather to *enjoy* the sentiment of it; we play with it as children with edged tools; alas! ere long we cut our fingers, and the *sentiment* is gone. Sorrow is a cruel fact. But whatever I dealt with yesterday, it is no mere sentiment I approach to-day. Suffering is a serious fact. Viewing sorrow in its less severe degrees, suffering is to sorrow as the screaming tempest is to the mist of evening which follows the day of storm. Sorrow is to suffering as the quiet bed of convalescent sickness to the struggle of battle in wounds and blood. Great and terrible sorrow indeed becomes real suffering, and real suffering is a

very awful fact; it implies that our mysterious being is strained to something like extremest tension, exercised in that region of solitary and incommunicable mystery—the region of pain.

Very well, where do you find the highest ideal of the Christian life? No pen could have written the answer to that question but one dipped in the inspiration of the Precious Blood.

Be sure it was by a flash of genius that Dante first saw and then depicted the angel's face in the "Purgatorio" "like a benediction;" by a flash of genius that Fra Angelico conceived the soldier saint, in the last judgment, embraced by his guardian angel as a victor whose fight is won; it was the force of genius that gave to Raffaelle's hand the impulse whereby the eyes of the San Sisto Madonna blaze with an ecstasy of worship, and an astonishment of joy, carrying the heart of the gazer straight from the canvas to the eternal throne. Be sure it is by gift of genius that great thoughts have come to great thinkers whereby for us common men, like prophets, they have interpreted our own; but be sure it was more than genius, it was that direct descent of the thought of the Undying into the mind of man, which we call Divine Inspiration, that taught St. Paul to write as the highest human ideal—"conformity to His death."

To His death! Two facts must be remembered here. 1. That death was the crown, the result of *bodily*

anguish of the severest kind. The physical tension of the Passion was extreme. There is an off-hand habit among some of affecting to avoid unreal sentiment by warning us against "exaggeration" in speaking of the bodily sufferings of the Redeemer. The habit I think bad, for the notion is false. They cannot be exaggerated. Once grasp the Catholic Faith as expressed in the Creed of Nicæa, you will see three things—first, that an ingenuity of torture is discernible in the nails, the cross, the crown, the scourge; further, that this told on a frame not merely sensitive, but supremely sensitive from its supernatural dignity—"the body of God;" and lastly, that these sufferings were sanctified by that which they also expressed in language of overwhelming and pathetic power—His love for those for whom He died.

2. Another fact is not to be forgotten. Death was equally the crown of severest *mental* pangs. He plunged into a flood of suffering with the intensity of a full foreboding and a continuous consciousness—He was God. It is a true assertion, "God was the sufferer," and He suffered with the complete power of His being. "Man was the sufferer" also—He was perfect man, and suffered with the acute sensibility of His adopted nature.

What, then, is exhibited in this extremity of suffering? This: A will, a brave and blessed will, triumphant; a spirit wholly subdued, because unflinchingly disciplined and thoroughly in hand. A soul in the glow and glory

of a new atmosphere of heavenly origin, a new virtue—*that* Patience—that is, *that* Love in the strength of endurance—which is a creation of the Cross. More; here is seen the Representative Man self-forgetting in love for God; the living God emptied of self in love for man. To be "conformed to His death," then, is, according to our measure, to have at least *some* likeness to this; to have the spirit disciplined amid whatever sorrow, subdued at the cost of whatever suffering to *some* self-surrendering desire of love for God, and love for man; to have it in possession of some of that Divine degree of enduring strength which gives the soul a fair faint semblance to the great sweet Patience of Jesus Christ.

III.

Pardon me if I trespass for an extra moment to fortify this teaching of the ideal by reminding you of two lessons from the Mystery of Suffering, to learn which is indeed to be "conformed to His death."

1. It is from this aspect of the Passion that we learn "the uses of adversity."

Pain is, in a sense, a necessity; pain is a sable shrouded attendant of our mysterious life. This strange short struggle, so bright with joy, so dark with sorrow, involves the possibility—may I not say the certainty?—

of pain. If sorrow is (as it is) a universal language, pain is a world-wide experience. Pain is—though not always directly—connected with sin. One thing is certain, submit to it we must. The Stoic said, "Do so with dogged determination, because you must." Christ crucified says, "Receive it with resignation, or even welcome it, as the saints have done, with joy; it becomes a power quickening the spirit's glance into eternal realities of unimagined beauty, educating the soul for a better life." Nay, what is more, it helps it here. Temptation, my brothers, must come to you all; sharp and terrible. "Yield, therefore, you must," says frail human nature. This revelation of the ideal expressed in pain teaches "suffering you must conquer."

2. And lastly, you may think I am soaring too high; well then, turn to common things. It is from this aspect of the Passion that we learn how to meet the ordinary trials of every day. My brothers, face your daily life with an undisciplined temper, and its constant annoyances will fret you to death. Face it with some humble effort to keep before you the great ideal, and even its gravest trials become funds of strength. "Conformity to His death" is that ennobling temper which possesses a virtue capable of transforming great calamities and heart-piercing sorrows into abundant blessings; nay,—which is more,—capable of bringing large returns from slight self-conquests, of changing the trifles of life into powers for eternity.

Do you despise *this* thought? Nay, *this* is what is of value for us all.

"Why"—said a pupil of the great Angelo as he watched his master chipping carefully at the marble, with hands of power enough to throw in a few bold touches, an undying thought, into soulless clay—"Why waste your time on trifles?" The answer of the master was in this fashion, "Trifles! Understand, young man, that from trifles comes perfection and perfection is no trifle." My brother, the power of the Christian ideal is seen in its application to the *trifles* of life.

I pause—

> "The clouds that gather round the setting sun
> Do take a sober colouring from an eye
> That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality."

True; and believe me, the cloudy circumstances of a struggling life, and the impenetrable gloom that hangs about the grave, "do take" not merely "a sober colouring," but an illuminating glow "from the eye that hath kept watch"—persistent, reverent watch—upon the Passion of the Lord.

SERMON IV.

THE MYSTERY OF SACRIFICE

The Mystery of Sacrifice.

"*Ye know that ye were . . . redeemed . . . with the Precious Blood of Christ.*"—1 PETER i. 18, 19.

WE have turned some stray leaves, my brothers, in the mysterious volume of the Passion of the Lord. On each leaf we have found a lesson, and these lessons are not isolated instructions; they are bound together by one serious thread of unity, each springs direct from the unfathomable but certain fact—the death of our Divine Redeemer.

Here are the lessons in few words. The mystery of humiliation teaches humility; the mystery of sorrow guarantees and supplies consolation; and—like the fair sadness-stricken face of the Cenci, like the slowly fading tints of an autumn sunset—the mystery of suffering hints at the brightness of a better life, and supplies an ideal. These are truths; call them "teaching," "hint," or "guarantee," or what you please, they are none the less, let this be remembered, truths involved in the fact of the Passion.

However, I would have you notice now that truths

though they are, they fail—to use for a moment the language of mathematics—they fail to *satisfy* the expression in the text. To do that something more is required, and the need of that being done reminds us that the philosophy of the Crucifixion supplies that "something more." The Apostle's phrase that we are "redeemed" reminds me of the central truth, *that* round which all these revolve, *that* from which they derive their interest, and indeed their significance. That truth is the fact of Atonement, or, as I prefer to phrase it, "the Mystery of Sacrifice." This is implied, I submit, in the Apostle's bold assertion.

I.

To see this clearly, and to expand it to the full, ask, I beseech you, ask this one question—

Why "the *Precious* Blood of Christ"?

1. And first I answer, "Precious" from universal, subjective necessities; needs of man, that is, needs felt, certified within the precincts of the soul.

You are conscious—at least unless there is some failure in sanity—conscious of your own intrinsic nothingness, the state of one who simply holds whatever he has in trust for, subject to, the pleasure of another. You are conscious, too conscious, if life has made with you some little progress, conscious of heart-rending

sorrow. Conscious, too, I trust, not only of the distance between actual condition and possible achievement, and of a desire to make that distance less, that is, conscious of an ambition to be better. Ah, me! these are like the mists of morning or the darkness of tempest gathering round the mountain chasm, they are serious and solemnizing, but they conceal the worst; get nearer to the edge and you see the abyss. Under and beside all these you are conscious, surely you are conscious, of sin.

What of it? Well, this at least—

Of all the perplexing questions which exercise the religious intellect, scarcely one but runs up into that darkest enigma, the origin of sin.

Some thinkers of the old world believed it to arise from ignorance, others from misfortune; the one solution is untrue to undeniable facts, the other only shirks the difficulty. This, however, is a result. Like a sound in a silent house at midnight without an assignable cause, like the first shock of the unexpected earthquake in the chasms of Capri, the mystery of origin lends added horror to the dreadful fact.

And then, too, all mankind are involved in this aboriginal catastrophe. Each one has certainly his own sin as a sad possession, a transmitted heirloom of death. Not one stands quite outside the sorrow; in the darker recesses of this my mysterious being, however solitary, however attended, certainly I have one awful intruder —I meet my sin.

And then, too, what heightens the horror of the situation, to deliver one's-self is impossible. Ah, my brother, how energetic is the insistance of this awful certainty! The "why" of such an enigma there is no time to examine here and now. The fact is incontrovertibly sure. Archimedes was strong in the knowledge of the power of his lever; granted only the fulcrum, nought could hinder him from moving the world. Ah! for you and me there is wanting both the fulcrum and the lever to remove the load of sin. The scared eyes of Jean Paul's imagined ghosts are a saddening parable of the sense of human horror in view of this dread, this universal, this irrevocable calamity. "No man can deliver his brother"—no, nor for the matter of that, himself either—"or make agreement to God for him."

Your sin, my sin, then, are facts, to us the most saddening, most oppressive. Ourselves we cannot free. Is there a power of deliverance?

The answer to such a question, I submit, must involve a mystery, the whole matter is so certain, and yet runs up so completely into the regions of another life. The answer has come; come, mysterious indeed, as we expect; but decisive and positive, as we need. The Christian faith alone has ventured on that answer. There *is* a power of deliverance, and its hieroglyph, the symbol which summarizes and expresses it, is "the Precious Blood."

2. Is any further elucidation forthcoming? any

greater precision possible? Again I ask, why "Precious"? My brothers, because it perfectly satisfies that one severe sense, that one great human desire, which has ever been an unerring witness of how alone sin could be remitted, the desire of expiation, the sense of sacrifice.

The old world in its most cultured people never lost this thought; the mystery of sorrow that hangs about the story of Iphigenia, or the troubles of Orestes, or the devotion of Antigone is the shadow of sacrifice. The great Greek sculptor who wrought for Alexander could not rest on any mere type of *power*. Herakles, son of Zeus, expiating evil in tremendous torments, the very type of strength in sacrifice, became his ideal. And I think it is no mere subjective dream if I say that, looking at the Farnese Hercules in the Roman Gallery, the mind is struck by something beyond the type of masculine vigour, namely, the shadow of sorrow consecrating the strength in an ideal at once Priest and Victim, strong to struggle and transfigured by suffering. Be that as it may, such a type was ever present to the mind of the ancient world, throwing into concrete form in painting or sculpture that awful human cry, the need of sacrifice.

And twin thought with this, has ever been present to the mind of man the horrible sense of a link between the mystery of Sin and the tragedy of Death. This has coloured, this always must colour life. All have felt it. To borrow an expression of Sainte Beuve,

arising out of an incident he touches, "The extreme of happiness scarcely separated by a trembling leaf from the highest pitch of despair—such is human life." Death is intertwined with life. No progress can alter its condition, no advance can reverse its prerogative, and nothing short of the triumph of the Resurrection could diminish its prestige. But what different interpretations have been put upon death! I borrow an example, worked out fully, if I rightly remember, in altogether another connection by a critic and moralist of our time. Salvator Rosa, with all his sunny Calabrian mountains, and his laughing skies of Italy, restless in heart, fretted by hypocrisies, parting company with the Christian Revelation, interpreted Death to mean Despair. Albrecht Dürer, albeit subject to the sadness of dim Franconian forests, or the genius of commonplace, from the trimness of the quaint and tidy German town, interpreted it of Hope and Victory. Why? The one, heart-sick, had broken with Christianity, the other was still face to face with the Crucifix.

Man has felt that the horror of sin and death is relieved by the dim desire of sacrifice, and the certainty that some great and splendid use of death must be, and *it* only can be, the "death of death" to man. That solemn human certainty has found its one adequate fulfilment in "the Precious Blood."

3. Can we go farther? Again I ask why "Precious"? Ah! here we touch this magnificent mystery. I fret

under this "quarter of an hour," in expanding this great, this blessed truth. Well, we may yet expand, but you must remember; let my other words go for what they are worth; *this*, my brothers, *this* is vital for you all.

Why "Precious"? Because the blood of a Divine Person Who assumed our manhood. On the hypothesis of the Arian impiety, as of its modern offspring Unitarianism—that sad faith that chills and stunts so many noble lives—on that hypothesis, the expression of the Apostle is an unmeaning exaggeration. Remember it is not reverence, but a failure in clear and consistent faith which makes you shrink from saying "the Blood of God."

Why "Precious"? Because it expresses shortly, strongly, the mystery of a real propitiation. The death of Christ was no mere evidence of heroism—if so, the taunt of unbelief is true, there were thousands as heroic—no, it is a Mystery of Sacrifice. Mark you again "*Mystery.*" The Father did not deal with the Son as an object of vindictive wrath. That is a parody on the Passion, the invention of a maimed theology. No, the wrath of God denotes the necessary attitude of God's holiness in relation to human sin; there is no variance of will between the Divine Persons in the one substantial life of God, the Atonement is the common manifestation of the mind, the act of all three Persons of the Blessed Trinity.

Why "Precious"? "The Precious Blood of Christ."

It is the speaking symbol of a perfect obedience, of a surrendered will, of a willing and entire oblation on the part of the Representative Man, Who is also none other than Eternal God. This is the mystery of Atonement. Oh, magnificent mystery! "What folly," to borrow an expression from a French essayist,—"What folly to paint romances when there is something far more wonderful which is true!" This, this is too universally demanded, and yet too entirely marvellous to admit of the thought that it is false. Anything so splendid, so awful, so needed, man cannot invent it—"the builder and maker is God."

II.

My brothers, you all have sinned. *Your* sin, yours can be forgiven; terrible, black, oppressive it may be, but there is pardon through the Precious Blood. What then is needed of you? It is said that Low Churchmen preach all Faith, that High Churchmen preach all Repentance. Suppose we turn from "High" or "Low" and listen to the Church—our mother—and try, instead of all fancy Christianities, simply the Catholic Faith.

Divine Faith has its work to do. Like the pencil of Guido, it displays a living picture; it says *Ecce Homo*, "Behold the Man." Have faith in God. But remember you are saved by no mental athletics, no juggle, no

trick of "believing." There must be the broken heart, the mystery of sorrow, sincere contrition, that response to grace which opens, which prepares the soul of the sinner for the power of the great sacrifice, for the absolving words of Jesus—pardon through "the Precious Blood."

The world is changing. Years go by with unrelenting swiftness. Much that seemed most stable, most enduring, melts in shadow, and fades in the darkness of the unreturning Past. Powers once apparently imperial are paralyzed in weakness or dead and gone. One, thank God, remains in unabated vigour to the end. It stands out ever more clear in contrast with a weak and waning world.

Bear with me a moment while I illustrate my meaning. I stood one summer evening on the commanding summit of Monte Gennaro, and gazed on one of the fairest, saddest landscapes in the world. To our right stood Soracte crowned with snow; to the left in the distance rose, ridge on ridge, the long blue lines of the Alban hills; before us stretched, in glowing light and saddening shadow, the undulating swells of the Roman Campagna. Close in the immediate foreground slept in the shades of evening rank gardens of abundant violets, carpeting in rich soft masses the site of the splendid villa of one of Rome's greatest emperors. Far away in the azure distance sparkled, under the crimson sunlight, the moving waters of the restless sea.

Between, stretched mile on mile of dim and variegated Campagna, with ruined columns, crumbling capitals, forgotten tombs. Here where Roman chariots rolled, where Roman legions marched, the song of the muleteer or the cry of the shepherd alone disturbs the solemn silence that else sleeps unvexed, unbroken, over this great cemetery of buried years. All was changed. The men who made that landscape memorable, all were gone; the place that once had known them knew them now no more. But above this scene of desolated beauty, against the upper purpling reaches of the sky, crowning the greatest of Christian churches, rose clear the Cross.

I passed to-day along the thoroughfares of busy London. The crowd was close and bustling. The carts and carriages thronged the streets, the foot-passengers hurried, pushed, or sauntered along the footpaths. The hucksters' carts were at the corners; the trinket-sellers drove their trade in watches, chains, and what not on the edge of the pavement; the little city Arabs pleaded their claims to purchasers' attention; the loungers gazed into the shop windows; the busy business men hurried on to work. All London was in life and movement, toil, fret, and change. We came in view of your great Cathedral dome, and then, as ever, one's heart thrilled to see in calm untroubled brilliance, above the hurrying city, the shining Cross.

Fit symbols these, my brother, of a fact, *the* fact of permanent importance to us all. Life changes; sin re-

mains as a dark fact varying only in circumstance. Sin remains, so does Redemption. "Stat crux dum volvitur orbis." Your life is passing. Dazzled now by the world of work or pleasure, one day the darkness comes as a sobering fact. When all seems fading from you in that darkness, remember, oh remember, sinning but repentant soul, unchanged, unchanging is the Mystery of Sacrifice, the blessed revelation of Redeeming Tenderness, the value of "the Precious Blood of Christ."

SERMON V.

THE MYSTERY OF POWER

The Mystery of Power.

"We preach Christ crucified, . . . the power of God."
—1 CORINTHIANS i. 23, 24.

SUCH is St. Paul's summary, such his philosophy of the Mystery of the Passion. It was a teaching new and strange—too new, too strange at once to be grasped or even credited—in the mind of licentious Corinth; but the beauty of it, a beauty which fascinated even the pleasure-loving Corinthians, the beauty of it was this—it was true.

This week you have lent me your attention as I have tried to pass before you some studies on the Passion. They have been, indeed—and none can feel it more than I—slender and sketchy; they have been undeniably inadequate, but they have led up to St. Paul's philosophy, and I hope and believe at least they are true.

Thus much we have seen. It is a mystery of humiliation. "Night comes," it says, like the watchman in the prophetic vision—"Night comes, but after night the morning. You must descend to rise, you must be humble if you are to attain to the knowledge of God."

It is a mystery of sorrow. It approaches the inner shrine of human desolation, explains in a measure that heartrending perplexity, and exhibits and certifies the sympathy of Christ. It is a mystery of suffering. It reveals the value of goodness by the infinity of endurance, not deemed too extravagant a standard up to which to recognise its right of demand; holding thus unfathomable possibilities before the mind. As the shining stars suggest, if they do not reveal, the infinite depth of azure stretching space after space beyond them; as there is some guarantee of resurrection (despite the disdainful rebuke of modern pessimists!) to be found in our anguish of heart at a freshly-covered grave; so *this* mystery teaches that to be growing better, to be stretching constantly towards the loftiest standard, is right *and* is possible; the possession of an ideal is permitted, and therefore is a duty to man. It is a mystery of sacrifice. This is the *central* truth of the Incarnation. Sin being a fact, forgiveness is a necessity; there is a truth in Atonement, there is pardon through "the Precious Blood."

What further? There is no "further" wanted. Surely, surely, we need nothing "further" than infinity. Michael Angelo, when Florence was no longer free, needed no "further" than the thought of the essential greatness of goodness, even in chains, even in the shrouds of sorrow, which he flung into the eyes and attitude of his "Night" and "Morning" in the chapel of San

Lorenzo. Dante, even Dante, with his great burning heart, was satisfied with no desire of "further" when Beatrice appeared in the light of the "Paradiso," and having seen that vision, he longed no more for earthly strife and victory, but dreaming of it, only asked in the mountains of Sestri, at the gates of Santa Croce del Corvo, for the gift of "Peace." St. Francis, in the bloom of his boyhood, with the bright free spirit of the hillsmen of Umbria, needed not—how could he?—a "further" when he caught the fair sad vision of the crucifix. And you and I, my brothers, you and I need nothing "further" than that same great vision.

Yes, we need this, just this; and this, in parting, I insist on, we must *make it our own.* Can you rest on a vision or a picture though illumined or painted by the rosy touch of the morning? If you can, certainly *this* vision, *this* picture is beautiful and strange enough to rivet regard. Can you find your peace in a prelude or a poem, even though, as this one, it is infinitely solemn and fair? I trow not. Fixing your eyes on the Mystery of the Passion, this question I ask you—I entreat you awake to the need of a clear and definite answer—Can *you* use it? *Do you* use it? What is its meaning to *you?* At least it is my business, my joy, to remind you what it may be.

St. Paul, with the memory of a black past behind him, with the piteous vision of Stephen's dying face of love and anguish haunting his conscience to the end; St. Paul,

wincing under the blows of his convictions, writhing with acute sensibility as a wounded sufferer with nerve vibrating beneath the knife; St. Paul broken, desolate, needy, sorrow-laden, yet vigorous with conscious strength, called it—because he felt the fact as a personal blessing—called the Crucifixion a *Mystery of Power*. "We preach Christ crucified—God's power." That, my brothers, it may be to us; that, in our weakness, is, I suppose, what most we are in want of—"God's power."

I ask where? Well, the practical result of all we have thought of is this: we are supplied with what we need for every department of our nature; and the question is, how may each soul of us utilize such assistance in our varied and marvellous being, utilize it for Eternity?

I.

My brothers, to put it shortly, three great ideas sum up and represent what is needed by us all for the fulfilment of vocation, and these are to be gathered from the Cross of Christ.

1. First in order is the idea of Duty. Duty has an almost infinite extension, touching often great undertakings, touching as naturally trifling things. Duty has a literally infinite claim, stern like the rocks of Lerici in their resistance to the sea, deep in its depth of power and possibility, like the fathomless waters that

sleep below. Duty! It makes an infinite claim, and it abates no demand: it is a pitiless power, like the forces of nature, the waves, or the wind; but to obey it, though I suffer, is a condition, a primary condition of human perfection—"I *must* do my duty."

Now we see in the moral mystery of the Passion *this* special characteristic majesty in the Representative Man. He perfectly subordinated every sinless desire of ease, or wish for deliverance, or enjoyment of pure affection, or yearning for natural rest, to the fulfilment of the claim, the infinite claim of duty, though it drove Him to His death. My brothers, in this He, Who gives Himself as an inward gift to the creature, exhibits here a mystery of moral power.

2. And then there is the idea of Love. Between man and God that is the most sacred word that can be spoken. It has this *specialité*, as the glow and brilliance of the stormy sky is so rich in radiance that it can be described by no one colour named by man, so this glorious affection sweeps through and beyond all limits of Space and bounds of Time; its attribute is infinity. If I *love*, it is not for a week or a century, it is, it professes to be, for ever. You do not fix a date up to which your wife, your child, your friend shall be dear to you and then your affection die. No, Love by its nature claims the colour of infinity, and therefore the true measure of its intensity is death. Love demands that all that interrupts the fulfilment of its being must die; in other words, the soul that

loves would reach even the limit of death in self-forgetting. So did Christ. I am assured in the gloom of the Passion that "God is Love." And this force of the Passion has strength to attract the soul to the Redeemer with the same infinite desire. To hear Him speaking truths in the language of absolute courage and irrepressible tenderness, amidst the agonies of dying, is to awaken our love. Love implies generosity of service; "loved *me*, gave Himself for *me*," rouses the generous answer "love for love." Now this is a spiritual power of the Passion drawing and enabling me to love God.

3. And then there is the idea of Holiness. Thus we name that perfect loveliness which is the result, the outcome, the sum of the moral glory of God. Now to the creature there is a possibility of the grasp and apprehension of the heavenly beauty; there is the possibility of that supernatural harmony of faculty, that inward withdrawal from the things of Time, and union with things of Eternity, which is man's highest spiritual destiny and desire. Whence this possibility? The fact was seen in Jesus crucified, and by the infinite merits of the Passion is guaranteed to man a share in the grace, in the life of the Man of men. Jesus crucified is the source, the promise of this power.

Power! What is power? Power is the living spirit expressing itself in success, expressing itself upon, or in spite of inert or opposing materials. Sometimes there

is outward failure and yet an evidence of power. The hero whose loss we mourn,[1] in the Transvaal suffered a heart-breaking defeat, but we think of him with love and sorrow for a real success, for real power amidst outward failure, for that brave audacity and self-sacrificing courage in loyalty to his country which, I trust, will always win the admiration of Englishmen. Sometimes power is evidenced by that great moral success, the success of self-restraint. Sometimes, again, when external nature, ay, and man's spirit too, is in question, there is evidenced the presence and action of the All-Powerful, expressed in His sway over the conscious or inert creation.

II.

I have walked the deck of an Atlantic steamer, and watched the wild waves of an Atlantic storm. The wind was screaming to a pitch of tempest, the clouds rolled mass on mass of inky blackness, only relieved by a glow of vivid fire. The waves towered high, then sank again in restless mountains and unstable valleys of seething sea. A splendid spectacle! the spectacle of Nature in exercise of unrestrained tremendous *power!*

I have watched the great engines in Chicago pump-

[1] Preached just after the arrival of the news of Sir Pomeroy Colley's death and the disastrous defeat of our arms in Africa.

ing up with steady unabated beat their three hundred million gallons hour by hour from the central depths of Michigan, for the use of that strangest city of the New World—but yesterday in ashes, to-day a rival to the most active centres of English commerce—the magnificent exhibition of mechanical power!

I have started turning into the Scuola di San Rocco at Venice, brought suddenly face to face with that grand and pathetic picture of the Crucified, displayed there these centuries in living colour from the genius of Tintoretto.

Nature, Mechanical Invention, Art—each show the mystery of *power*. But the power that consoles the sunken spirit, kindles the heart's best affections, changes and invigorates the stern or failing will, and transforms the corrupted soul to the likeness of the Divine ideal—a power moral, spiritual, supernatural—*that* is the greatest of all. Ah, my friends! that is provided by the merits of the Passion; it is found in the Incarnate Crucified; it becomes the possession of the creature by union with Christ. Drawn to Him by love, gazing on Him in faith, appropriating by hope, born into Him in baptism, fed upon Himself in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, you are partakers of the gifts of the Passion, sharers in the Mystery of Power.

III.

And now I draw to a close. It has been a joy to me o insist, even for these few moments, daily on some tray but fruitful thoughts arising out of the Mystery of the Passion. All too short, indeed, is the time to lwell on a mystery so immense, so moving; and yet n face of our Redeemer's great achievement perhaps he fewest words are best. Well, closing, I must offer a word of advice homely yet helpful; and while I thank ou for the attention accorded to me by this vast assemblage, I know that you will not grudge me, in speaking this word, some extra moments ere we part to-day.

Remember, then, it is only by a mind habituated to he severe effort of determined *meditation* that any nere isolated fact of history exhibits its spiritual meaning, reveals what is in it of mystery (that is, of eternal ruth), and becomes beautifully and perfectly one's own. Meditate, I beseech you—especially in the Holy Week —meditate upon the Passion.

Surely it is always a happiness to think of what is good, and strong, and beautiful; and He, especially in hose hours of triumphant sorrow, was—as Jean Paul as phrased it—"holiest among the mighty, and mightiest among the holy." It is a happiness which provides for us—if I may borrow a thought this time from a Frenchman—those pure emotions closely allied

to prayer, having power to create the rare half hours which give their benediction to our most ordinary days. Further—and we cannot afford to dispense with the thought—there comes with such meditation a sense of security. We are, and we know that we are, in danger. Your life, my brother, I undertake to say, is sufficiently perplexing. Sin in its advance is gradual, insinuating, strong. A heart endowed with the noblest emotions, a mind possessed of the most perfect ideal, may break and fail. What we want is salvation.

What is it to be saved? Is it to make a satisfactory investment in insurance against final punishment, when here in our mortal pilgrimage we have, so to speak, "taken our fling," and passion and ambition have had their unrestricted play? Certainly not. Systems of theology which allow or encourage such base ideals degrade the Religion of the Crucified.

What is it to be saved? It is to be placed habitually on a higher platform of thought, to hold the keys of the picture gallery of Eternity, where we may move in unembarrassed freedom when wearied with the fret and ugliness of every day. More, it is to be awakened to a sincerity of manly and abiding sorrow for aught in our motives or actions unworthy or wrong. More still, it is to be settled in pure, ennobling, peaceful, and high and purifying desire. In a sense at least I may say it truly, there are who are religious yet not good, there are who are good yet not religious; those

want a stronger moral purpose, these a keener insight into spiritual things. To be saved is to unite the two; to feel and fulfil the demands of our relationship to the Undying, and recognise and reach the accomplishment of the claim of duty to our fellows, who share with us the destiny of death.

What is it to be saved? It is to have that light of the heart, that strength of the will, that eager purity of the affections, by the force of which we breast the waves of sorrow, sustain ourselves with meekness under the strain of success, and in the darkest hours, as in the brightest moments, do not fail in unselfishness and truth.

What is it to be saved? It is to rise out of the ruts of convention; it is to strangle the treachery of self; it is to have the clear eye and spiritual understanding of the inhabitant of eternity, to see the beauty of that light that "never shone on sea or sky," the light of perfect human goodness reinforced and purified by heavenly love; to be advancing in fitness to play our part as citizens of that blessed commonwealth which is quickly coming—"the New Heaven and the New Earth wherein dwelleth Righteousness."

That, my brothers, *that* is to be saved! Oh, lofty aspiration! oh, inspiring vision! oh, stimulating thought! Can we see it more clearly, picture it more plainly? Indeed we can. In one word, it is to have the heart of a man, as his Creator conceived him, pure, tender, and

loving; it is with that heart to love God supremely, perfectly; and in God to lose self in love for others—*that* is to be saved!

Can this be ours? Thou hast answered, "It can," O my Jesus! my Redeemer! The lesson of it comes from the Crucified; its power, its possibility from the Precious Blood.

There are scenes, there are pictures, there are poems which never die. They live in the memory waiting for future fulfilment, like the light of the summer evening clinging to the azure of the zenith till it meets and kisses the morning dawn. There are faces in whose strange and striking beauty a whole world of heavenly purpose is revealed to the enraptured gaze. Such visions of beauty (have you seen them?) are possessions for eternity. Your atheists may argue for ever, but their folly astonishes and saddens you more than their vulgarity disgusts. Why? You have *seen* God, for these are manifestations, in power, of God's beauty.

I remember one summer morning sweeping through the Straits of Messina; the light was creeping up the heavens—it was scarce an hour before the dawn. On the left rose the rough rocks of Calabria, on the right the laughing gardens of Sicily. Slowly the still smooth sea acquired a brightening colour—slow, gradual, sure: we did not see the cause, but the effect was plain. First the quiet grey of morning under the breeze of dawn—calm, sweet, pathetic whisper of another life; then the

shimmer of twinkling silver deepening and passing into gold; then the increasing splendour of living colour, until the rocks of Sicily and the eddying waves of the Faro were drenched in the glow and depth of crimson with the fine brilliance of fire—so gradual, then so splendid. Ah, me! one never forgets it; only one out of these many million splendid pageants which Nature day by day is acting, unseen by mortal gazers, in the mysteries of sea and sky. A parable of grace! Slow but surely —for the unseen Sun of Righteousness is there—the brightening beauty illuminates the waves of life.

My brothers, you will think of my words, all unworthy and how incomplete! You will think, ah, you will think of Him Whom I have placed before you —Christ Jesus crucified—the Fairest of the fair!

Draw to Him in thought, carry your sins to Him in penitence, open the heart to Him in prayer, feed upon Him in the Sacrament of His love, imitate by earnest persevering effort the sacred self-forgetting of that most holy life. So will you feel and own His power, blessing you, and you shall be blessed. And oh, the solace when you come to die, to rest and lean in that last hour of mortal anguish on Him Who died! Time goes, and you and I are nearing eternity. Live for that for which life is worth the living—the glory of God revealed to us mortals in the Mystery of the Passion.

Blessed Jesus! give us grace to know, to emulate, to love Thee. Give us power to fight under Thee our

Leader, and—brave, faithful, persevering—to rest in Thee, as those we love are resting, when the struggle is done.

"Blessed Jesus! Thine the glory.
May we know Thee strong to save,
Praise, when ends our mortal story,
Thee the Conqu'ror of the grave."

SERMON VI.

THE MYSTERY OF DEATH

The Mystery of Death.

"*I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins.*"—1 CORINTHIANS xv. 3.

AMONG the anxieties which were pressing upon the Church of Corinth was a serious difficulty about the Resurrection. Christian thought on many other subjects was then, as now, in restlessness and confusion. Perplexities seemed to multiply on all sides; and while the spiritual understanding was gradually grasping with greater firmness the true bearings of spiritual fact, the uneasy human intellect was baffled at every turn, face to face with a revelation of mystery. Social, ecclesiastical, personal, theological questions, under new lights and involving new readjustments, were constantly emerging above the horizon of the time; but pre-eminently were men's minds in Corinth disturbed by one vital inquiry—Had Christ or had He not literally risen from the dead?

With this question, which the Apostle felt to be one of paramount importance, he dealt in this splendid chapter in his own masterly way.

This, however, is not our subject now. There was an antecedent matter in the history of his Master upon which, and necessarily, he was emphatic and distinct. "Necessarily," I say, for—at any rate later in the Church's life—its literal truth was questioned too. It had to be remembered at Corinth, it was a fact of primary significance, it was a truth of history, and to St. Paul himself was probably "received" by direct revelation, that Christ had *died*.

It is sometimes said that the Resurrection was the Gospel preached by the Apostles. Scripture, indeed, assures us that at least one chief object of the Apostolic vocation was to witness to this fact. But we must not forget that so it was for this reason, amongst others, that *it* was the Divine testimony to the perpetuity of the meaning of His death.

St. Paul's statement, then, in the text is interesting, because it reminds us that the reality and object of the Redeemer's death is a part of Apostolic tradition; that it was of such supreme importance that the fact was probably—as we have seen—revealed directly to the Apostle himself; and that its reassertion at Corinth was needful fully to meet the danger arising from the denial of the Resurrection.

I need hardly remind you that from the first the vast realm of mystery unfolded by that death has been a constant object of Christian contemplation. No one can read the words of our Lord Himself and fail to be struck

with the persistent and mysterious manner in which again and again He seemed to delight in dwelling upon its greatness and its sorrow. No one can avoid a sense of the awfulness of the meanings enfolded in the death of Christ, when once attention is drawn to the almost disproportionate space given by each of the Evangelist historians to every detail of that solemn tragedy. And all down the ages of the Church's eventful history, in the writings of the Saints, and the more sober thoughts of ordinary men, we know that the same place of pre-eminence has always been assigned to the Mystery of the Passion. And the reason is, that once let any part of its meaning be taught to God's people by the Spirit,—Whose office it is to reveal Christ,—it is seen to be in a thousand directions itself an illuminating power. Not to know something of the force of that fact is to be in needless darkness on some of the most intimate mysteries of the lives of us all.

You will not blame me, then, if, with a sense of the powers of vision, the possession of which we remember in this later period[1] of the Christian year, I ask you this evening to *resume* generally some of the thoughts which occupied us in detail in Passiontide, and to step back with me in a sense to Good Friday, and the great fact which closed the Agony.

Then we gazed in wonder and worship at the fact; we may think in calmer mood to-night of a part at least of its meaning.

[1] This sermon was preached towards the close of Whitsuntide.

I.

I ask one question—"Why did He die?"

And first it is well to take a hasty view of the necessary and broad answer before we go on to one particular outcome of the Passion, on which I would fasten your attention now.

"Why did He die?"

On one point we Christians need never tire to dwell, that Christ has bequeathed to us the invaluable legacy of a true ideal. Wanderers as we are in a world of conflicting interests, pilgrims with many cross paths before us, and often bewildered by a night of darkness only illumined by flashes of sudden light, which tend too frequently to make the blackness into deeper gloom; seamen on a wild and dangerous ocean, with need for a pilot, with scarcely the glimmering of the light of stars; workers amidst a Babel of confusing voices and perplexing passions,—not once but many times we have to ask ourselves what path we must choose, on what pilot we can rely, whose voice we can listen to with a certainty of confidence.

Some of us surely have been *driven* to Christianity, stung into the determination to trust and be strong by that unmatched, that matchless example of human goodness and Divine compassion which has crossed our path and arrested our regard in the Gospel history.

My brothers, religion is a personal question. We

have our life to live on earth, with all the immensity of its eternal issues, once and no more. In plain words, we desire to know how to conduct ourselves, and our desire is satisfied by the *ideal* left by Christ.

Well, *these* facts—to go no further—of His character have fascinated Christendom and revolutionized the moral world. There was in Him a sincerity and simple-mindedness which were yoked with restrained and yet unmeasured power. It is needless to say that whenever this is realized in life its effect is overwhelming.

Account for *why* you were at one blow struck into obedient love for a human character, the character of one who has been now perhaps long, with intimacy known, and tried by the ordinary tests of years of experienced goodness; tried, and found ever more worthy. Still the first strong impression has been deepened and strengthened, never changed. Why?

Why human love is given to another is a problem too deep entirely to solve perhaps this side the grave; but at least one comprehensive answer may often safely be hazarded. Sincerity, simple-mindedness, and power form a conjunction whose attractive influence is with difficulty resisted by an honest heart; yes, we differ widely, or you will agree with me that nothing is so simply irresistible as this.

And then, further, in Jesus of Nazareth there was a noble-mindedness, a loftiness of tone which struck and moved.

Men, as a rule, forget Eternity, *or* they neglect the

facts of Time. You business men are in danger at least of doing the first, so imperious and close are the claims of every day; the religious enthusiast is in danger of the last, perspective is so lost before his straining gaze. Christ did neither. He was eminently practical. He "worked while it was called 'to-day,'" He taught the ignorant, cured the sick, rebuked the sinful, comforted the sorrow-laden, played the rôle of a carpenter, of a son, of a friend, of a teacher, of a citizen, of a prophet all in one, and a thousand more, and did each perfectly. That was the wonder. He neglected nothing, was never swayed unduly by ephemeral circumstance, or failed to maintain between conflicting duties a due proportion. He touched the commonest things; whatever He touched He raised; He carried contentedly the atmosphere of Eternity into the work and trials of Time.

And what rendered, what renders, I may say, such an one so entirely approachable? I answer boldly, His extraordinary devotion, yes, *devotion* to the human race.

Man is a complex being, and he is crusted over with pettiness and sin. So great we are, and then so miserably mean, it is hard to track the good amidst the tangled mass of disappointing weakness. Christ seemed to see deeper than others. He looked straight through. He set His saints the example they by His grace so nobly followed. He loved humanity. There was in Him that splendid union, loyalty to Love and devotion to Duty.

Now to complete the picture was needed the tragedy of Death. Given absolute human perfection in a world death-stricken, then not merely, as Plato said, must the good man suffer at the hands of sinners, but the ideal must be perfected by submission to the common doom of death. Death was the only artist's hand that could complete the picture. Death, willing, loving, terrible, was the one possible expression of the full ideal, —entireness of self-surrender, perfection of self-sacrifice.

Why did He die?

The deepest mystery of Revelation is the Mystery of Atonement. Yes, but like all mysteries of God, it throws a needed light upon the darkest passages of the life of man.

Something within us tells us of the chasm between our personal acts and the fulfilment of a righteous law. That fulfilment is in the Atoning Sacrifice. Sorrow-laden sinners, with a sense of hope and thankfulness we draw in our penitential moments to the Cross of Christ.

The Faith of the Church has ever reminded us of these three things. First, that the Divine Victim was a willing sufferer; again, that the Mystery of Atonement was the will and work of all three Divine Persons of the Holy Trinity; and further, that there was and is, in the fact of the Incarnation, a marvellous but true relationship of Christ to every member of the human race. I need do no more than recall *that* essential truth to you to-night, "He died for our sins.

Why did He die?

Certainly to complete that sympathetic tie that binds Him to us all. There is—we feel sometimes awfully—there is an appalling difference between Christ and ourselves. But the difference is not disheartening. So like, yet so unlike! Dear Lord! He is unlike us in the reality of Godhead, which witnesses overwhelming power; but He is like in the majesty of sorrow, which witnessed reassuring tenderness. The Death on Calvary —so Scripture, so the human heart has revealed to us —is a testimony of unchanging love.

II.

And now, therefore, my friends, I come to the point at which above all I aim to-night. If it be true—and I think it is—that Christianity has done much to make it for us Christians a very solemn thing to die, has the Founder of our Religion done anything to soften that solemnity? If not, then our Faith would wholly unman us, and, with a world so full of difficulty, so beset with peril, the last thing we can seriously desire is to be unmanned.

I pass by, then, these grave, broad answers to our primary question, and I turn to one point. I beg you, in view of this solemn fact in the history of Christ, to ask yourselves, under the darkness, under the light of Calvary, "what is the significance of Death?"

Well, clearly Death is a fact; a fact of intimate and universal interest; it is true of us all, we must die.

And common as is the truth, it is of ever-recurring and special importance to remember that it is a fact of which we have had no sort of experience, and yet such that it is certain of us all. In a world of infinite possibilities, and therefore of immeasurable uncertainties; a world in which we feel at every sunrise like travellers in a country unmapped, because hitherto unexplored; in a world in which the vast and constant laws of life combine to form—in the language of mathematics—endless series of permutations and combinations, by their subjection to the influence of the special conditions of each individual being; in a world in which no set of circumstances, that is, no state of the relations of time and place with *each* soul, are precisely the same; in a world in which new landscapes, so to speak, are ever being unfolded before the astonished eye; in a world like this it is no trifling matter of which it can be said,—*this* at least is certain. Of one fact it is well to remember *that* saying is undeniably reliable; certainly we shall die. Here, at least, is one feature in the face of death which commands attention and awe.

There is another. Death is the consummation of the tragedy of Change. All things are moving on. The universe, in its immensity transcending the grasp even of imaginative thought, has its share in this mysterious truth. No atom of matter perishes, but all are victims

to the inexorable necessity of moving on. The changes are what we call slow. So slow—that is, on such a scale of immensity beyond the scale of our ordinary reckoning—that we scarcely notice them, and we are even tempted to doubt. Holy Scripture, in Genesis especially, is so impressed with this truth that at times its statements seem incredible, until the wiser eyes of deep spiritual thinkers notice the careful accuracy of the hints it gives—words of wisdom so deep that they are also simple, so full that they satisfy the wisest, as they charm the little child.

Here and there this little globe of ours presents some palpable evidence which is well within our grasp, and seeing this, we awaken to the wider truth of which these are slight but plain examples. We know from geological discovery that there are fair green meadows browsed by sleepy herds, that there are gaunt majestic mountains trodden by man's adventurous foot, swept by the winds of winter, glowing in the summer sun, where once were tracts of illimitable desolation ploughed by the ploughshares of inexorable ice. We dream to-day among the murmuring forests on the shore of the Adrian Sea, and remember that not so many ages past, the fleets of the Cæsars rode at anchor where now no waves are sounding except the wandering surges of the wind beating on the barriers of the breezy pines.

Slowly they pass these cycles of unresting change;

owly the rivers glide through sleeping corn-lands, roll own their rocky channels, and sweep into the sea; owly the day advances, gathers dimness, passes into ight; slowly the night creeps on into the ocean of ncreasing brightness, and is lost and engulfed in the lories of the dawn.

All is changing—we ourselves among the many facts hat people this mysterious life. To-day seems not ll unlike our yesterday, to-morrow will probably be trangely like to-day; but when years have past, ome opposing fact—like a sudden sound at midnight, bird blown against the rain-resounding pane, the hisper of a scared voice in our ear—awakens us to uller consciousness, and then we find, however gradu-lly, that *we* too have changed.

Stay; again we meet the mystery of a constant ct. Personality remains; years, effects, events, hopes, ersons flit past as in the mystic march of life, but *we* emain.

It is one of the saddening puzzling truths of every fe the fact of change.

I stood one autumn long ago on a point of that fair nge of hills that circles Florence. It was evening, ne sun was westering fast, great rolling clouds were athering mass on mass over Vallambrosa; the sky pread in stretches of graduated crimson above the orizon line that marked the utmost reach of visible istance on the bosom of the western sea. Below us

lay the City of the Lilies—that dome of majesty, the envy of Angelo, the admiration of the world, conceived and carried out by Brunelleschi's power—the magic grace of that campanile of many-coloured marble, offspring of the genius of Giotto; the white pinnacles of Santa Croce; the dark façade of the Pitti; the frowning cornice, and the stern but graceful tower of the Palace of the Commonwealth. Peak after peak, pinnacle after pinnacle, dome after dome, stood out in the mellowing mist of evening, sleeping by the rushing Arno—the fairest city of the Middle Age. We gazed in silent love and wonder at dreaming Florence. A lad came by, a little lad, and stopped beside us. "*This*," said the little fellow at last, "*this* remains always beautiful." The accent on the "*this*" perhaps gave some faint whisper of a sense even in that young heart that *other* fair things did not stay. I think it simply came from a soul that as yet knew nothing of the agony of Change. "Poor little fellow," sighed my companion, "he knows little of the tragedy of life!"

No; not "always beautiful," for it will change. Change upon change is the sad law of this mortal pilgrimage; the tears may start, hearts, loving hearts, may ache in sorrow, and break with partings, but change and partings come.

Now, Death is the crown of change. All other changes are as nothing compared with this. To pass into wholly altered, wholly untried conditions; to lose

our foothold on the sands of Time; to fail from the presence of our former selves; to know that *the* moment is approaching when we shall be face to face with the Unknown;—this surely strikes the strongest heart with awe; is it unmanly to say with fear?

There is a tragic strain in every life when, taking account of so much that has been full of love, and joy, and happiness, we say, "It can never be again." That tragic strain is heard in its deepest chords, in its fullest, most heart-rending music, in the Mystery of Death.

Once again—whatever be the meaning lying beyond, Death in one sense is an unparalleled catastrophe. The ancients have been imagined by some to be better off than ourselves in view of Death, but here we are side by side. When they thought of it at all, they gazed shuddering at a world of gloom. To them it was altogether shrouded in the robes of night.

Even the fairest rays of glimmering hope in the "Phædo" are intermingled with the darker clouds of an unfathomed despondency. At the best their state of soul at death was a calm despair. Life was so bad that they faced the untried future with clenched teeth and set countenances, as men who face the inexorable with wild despairing courage, because they will not dishonour their manhood, and it *must* be faced. Cicero, so full of life he was, and so under the empire of his

affections, so to speak wrung his hands and wail at the thought of it. Cato, harder, possibly brav certainly less human, because less loving, is an instan of the "calm despair." Yet even he, because he w man, had, to use Niebuhr's words, "in terril moments to find breathing-room for his feelings, a so sought for support in the example of a great m . . . and took leave of the world, turning his mind the contemplation of the last hour of one of the m virtuous men on earth."

The philosophic thinkers, the tragic poets of t ancient world, tell the same story by their unvaryi strain of sadness; do what they would, it was unparalleled catastrophe.

We Christians feel, in a sense, the same. Did y ever take from your shelves a long-closed volume, a shake out from its pages unawares a letter, bearing t vivid expression of energy and life and love, written a dear dead hand? Why do you start? Why fo moment are you all unmanned? Why does the po nancy of a buried grief rise up and stab you sharply the day he died? Every word speaks clear and pl off that inexorably faithful paper; every pen-str carries in itself the mysterious presence of a once character. "Littera scripta manet," yes, "remai but only to mock you. "Where is he?" "How does feel to *me?*" "Shall we meet again?" "Shall we

to each other what once we were?" Whatever answer comes, this, *this* is certain;—what once was is not, and can be no more, and your first fresh agony of human love declares there is no sadness like *this* sadness.—Death is an unparalleled catastrophe.

Think one moment more. On your table you have the portrait of your wife, your child, your friend? Are they near you? You scarcely care to look at it. Why? Because that sweet presence is about the house. Absence comes, if I may use so bold a phrase; seas or continents divide you, you love the portrait better, for absence is the first, faint, saddening image of the great "farewell." Let the grave divide. You cannot bear to part with that portrait now. In vacant hours, in moments of the pauses of your work, half unconsciously your eye wanders to yon picture. It is all that you have left you of what was once so dear, so fair; it is the outward symbol of a treasured memory. That glance of yours is the homage of human love and anguish to the majesty and awfulness of Death.

Enough. If such thoughts were only the outcome of that poisonous thing,—sickly sentiment,—they could but tend to debilitate the character if they did not lead to something worse. They would be unquestionably wrong if they were *only* weakening. My brothers, they are strong, and true, and human, face to face with Christ.

III.

It is false, it is foolhardy to say Death is not terr
It *is* terrible. It is always sad. But we dare not
it merely in the light of human feeling. We Christ
are placed by a miracle of love in a new sphere of b
And if our Christianity be no dream, but, as it is, a g
reality, we must view all objects, even this saddening s
tacle, in the light and atmosphere of the New Crea

1. We are "in Christ," and Christ has died. Rem
bering this, I ask in an altogether happier ten
"What is the significance of Death?"

Certainly death even "in Christ" is a punishmen
sin. It is the inevitable penance of the sinning thc
repentant soul. Yes! It is the severe penalty t
paid by all. The good and beautiful, the young
fair, each, all must enter this dusky portal, and
the solemn mystery alone. But as surely also,
Christ," it takes a touch from the Passion, a p
from the Precious Blood.

"Right dear in the sight of the Lord is the deat
His saints." Ah!—we cannot doubt it—that g
mystery has for souls that seek Him some purif
some almost sacramental efficacy; because Christ
Death has in great measure *changed its meaning.*
have seen, I have seen, some dear soul, so youn
beautiful, so good, that we felt the world needed, ol

sorely! that such should be left to live, called by slow and pining sickness: day by day we have watched with a sinking heart the increasing, the warning beauty of the hectic cheek, but we have been more startled and consoled to notice how, almost visibly, the soul has advanced through its trial to perfection, as the poor body hastened—still witnessing to the hidden spiritual loveliness even in its flagging forces—hastened to decay. There only wanted—ah! we felt though we sorrowed, there only wanted death to perfect all.

Then, again, death "in Christ" is an escape from a world of trouble.

Only lately I could not but remind you of this, in touching upon the death of one all too early called away.[1] Who could choose but mourn that we should see that fair young face no more? Still, since indeed he had sought to serve God, since indeed he had tried to do his duty, one could not fail to feel that with life, such as life is, in its fever fires of temptation, and possibilities of fall—

> "Surely God, in dearly loving,
> Gave him young His gift of death."

Yes! yes! We weep over such graves, and who can blame us? But for the dear one gone, we know it is blessed, "taken away from the evil to come."

[1] The allusion is to a sermon preached in reference to the sudden death of a sailor-boy of unusual promise, too early lost.

What is the significance of Death? Death in Chris is an accident in immortality. The great Unity of Life lasts on. Only, like the Sicilian rivers of Grecian poem, Life's stream had flowed here in rugged channels and under cloudy skies, then it had disappeared for a time into the chambers of darkness, only to reappear in fairer regions and by the sunny sea. The immortal life knows no break in its continuity, only *here* it is a life sin-stained, sorrow-laden; *there* sin is gone and sorrow ended, when "in Christ" the living spirit passes the gates of the grave.

And further, one of the bitterest pangs of life is the pang of the parting of friends. Now, death "in Christ" is the entrance to a land where partings are no more.

It is rest from labour, it is the close of struggle, it is the sleep of the blessed, it is the fulfilment of the earthly pilgrimage; it is indeed solemn, for it is the opening of an eternal future, but it is the passage to the Audience Chamber, it is admission to the unimagined blessedness of the Presence of Christ

2. There always is, there always must be, something awful in the thought that I must die. For Death has had a fatal affinity to the Prince of Darkness. He, so Scripture says in a great mystery, had "the power of death;" and at the last, a climax in the triumph of the Christ is reckoned to be that moment when Death and Hell are cast into the bottomless pit. True; but the Passion of Christ conquers by transforming all.

n Christ" even Death wears a new aspect. It is
e the angel of the "Purgatorio," the fair sweet pilot
oss waters of blessedness to a kingdom of peace. "In
rist" it is still certainly awful, but it is blessed to die.
Yes, it is certainly awful. Again the thought
eats itself like a recurring death-peal or an oft-
ated dirge. There are moments in life when, under
ense of special failure or bitter disappointment,
are rudely and suddenly brought to a stand. Till
ı all went evenly in its natural way, and life seemed
ordinary, it was accepted without question and
l without fear. All has changed. This passionate
t has been required, and unexpectedly, to relax its
p on some object of desire. A friend has failed us;
pe has withered; fortune has turned upon us grim
ghastly, a moment before it was in the smiles of
ıg-time, and now it has the chilling aspect of the
l. Changes are gradual, and we are slow to notice
treacherous approach of their stealthy footsteps,
so when our eyes are opened, it is with the shock
surprise.

here is no surprise, I suppose, like the call to die,
ı it comes to those few who to each of us give life
neaning, or when at last it comes to ourselves.
ous are its approaches. It may be by slow and
ıring illness; it may be by a sudden call; but in
case, swift and wonderful it comes. Brave men
had before now to look into the face of that

inexorable visitant but for a few short seconds on the roaring ocean, or in the night alarm, or on the battle-field. Brave men and women have confronted it with undaunted resolution and self-conquering calmness; but the inner agony of such brief moments, who can tell?

Now, how may *we* hope to endure the pang when it severs others from us? how bear ourselves wisely in that vast calamity when *our* time comes? The question has undoubtedly, I repeat, a special solemnity for the Christian world. There is a real truth in the intended taunt that Christianity has added a deeper sadness to the grave. The heathen might die in philosophic calmness; *we* who have learned more of the solemn responsibilities of life, and of the greatness of our eternal future, cannot in *that* way, at least, afford to be so calm. But the theory of "ignorance being bliss" will scarcely be welcomed by those who know the dignity and the sorrow of a truer knowledge of God.

If Christianity has made death more serious by revealing hidden facts of another life, has it not also —for this, too, we must remember—much to offer of *compensating strength?* If all I have said be true, certainly it has. And more, how much, oh, how much help it gives in preparing for the end! There may be for the Christian, not indeed the calmness of ignorance and insensibility, but the nobler calmness of an unfaltering faith.

To live in Faith is to prepare to die. Christ by His death has given us a ground of confidence in His unflagging tenderness, and it is devotion to a person, it is faith in Jesus Christ which, as it conquers the world, so it subdues the grave.

Where faith is increasing, where, with a loving heart, indeed, for those around, we have still the eye fixed upon the unseen reality, and a glance powerful in piercing the clouds of Time, there will be further that secret resignation to the will of God, which is unlike the dogged obstinacy of Stoicism, just because the place of a slave is different from the relationship of a child. This is, indeed, no easy discipline, and certainly to be resigned when God calls to the last great surrender implies that we have steadily been learning that submission to His will which gives the beauty and dignity to the moral aspect of the Passion of Jesus Christ.

There is in this, yes, there is a touch of sadness. The clouds of evening may be beautiful, but then that golden glory suggests the deepening of the night. Yes, it is sad to die. But resignation to the great and loving will of God, and faith in His promise and His power, if they do not destroy the sadness which must accompany our human life, which must stand with us by the grave, at least they prepare us to bear the trial with unflinching courage and supporting hope.

Let us pray, let us strive for that brave, self-sacrificing, submissive mind, whereby facing daily trial, but

facing it always in calmness and love, it may train us for the last trial of all.

The sting of death is sin. "See that ye hate the thing that is evil," see that ye love the Lord. Faith, Repentance, Resignation—these are learned, these are given us, from the Passion, and these are the preparations to die.

I close. Turning to the face of the Crucified, let us sum up all.

My brothers, there are some facts common to us all, which bind us in indissoluble bonds. There are some truths having relation to us all, with which none can afford to part. There are some words written plainly in the language of us all which appeal to every soul. Of such facts one has an unrivalled awfulness—we have a common destiny of death. Of such truths one has an unmeasured value—we have Atonement in the death of Christ. Of such words one has an unfailing grandeur—that word is duty. We all must die; well is it for us—for we are sinners—in repentance to claim God's pardon; well also to help one another in this short and eventful pilgrimage, that when we reach the end, to God, to man, by grace, with unregretted earnestness our duty may be done.

In view of the end that lies before us, let us not dream when the world needs our efforts; let us, oh, let us at least do our duty.

More: there is offered to each of us a blessed hope.

hope is in Christ. In that hope we may fulfil one
requirement, we may be strong.
live in a manful and abiding sorrow for sin; to
e with increasing efforts towards our great Ideal, to
in the self-sacrificing love which makes the life of
a rich inheritance for all; to deepen in a steadfast
in the Father, Who is revealed to us in the tender
of the Divine and Human Son;—this, this is to rob
h of its terrors; this, this is to tread the rough and
ndid path of the Passion. This is to enter into the
ning of that great assurance—

"O death of Christ, the death of death to me!"

SERMON VII.

THE MYSTERY OF THE GRAVE

The Mystery of the Grave.

'vered unto you . . . that which I also received, how that . . .
r buried, and that He rose again."—1 CORINTHIANS xv. 3, 4.

memory of the Burial of Jesus is stamped upon
ıe heart of Christendom. There are many reasons
should be so. In the first place, since our dear
ı The Eternal Word, *every* act of that most sacred
ɪ death has its special energy and appropriate
ance, and this mystery amongst others; there-
is that the Church in her solemn Litany unites it
e "precious death," and the Sarum Primer speaks
"Thy blessed burying." And again it is one of
ɔre of mortal *experiences* laid up, not by omni-
ɔower but by personal trial, in the heart of God.
more, the thought of this mystery appeals to
f the tenderest and most awestricken yearnings
human heart. The account of the fact in the
narrative is so concise, and yet so full of solemn
, that it takes rank among those passages where
irit of God sketches in one or two bold touches
ılines of the mystery, leaving the human spirit to

fill in the details of the picture; and then too it stands in direct relation to that strange border-land, at the memory of whose twilight indistinctness voices are hushed, and dreams of ambition die—the border-land of the grave.

Into the prevailing energy of "the blessed burying" of the Lord as felt in the mystery of relationship between God and man we may scarcely penetrate. But it is possible (is it not?) to see, as we stand by the grave in the garden, something of the power this submission of Jesus has exercised on the life and thought of Christendom.

Brethren, there are days which take a moral colouring from the beliefs and memories of man as the leaden coloured sea from the still grey clouds. Men have looked at them so long and lovingly, associating their flying hours so steadily with some one dominant thought, that what is often the case in isolated subjective fancy for a single soul, becomes in reference to these the unconquerable feeling of a nation or a race. Such is the experience of us all on an English Sunday. So long have sacred associations clothed the day that it would require a distinct mental effort to place it on the common level of the rest of the week—that day whatever more it has, has to any ordinary Christian at least some touch and tone of Blessing and Peace.

Now to those who have followed with living faith the last earthly footsteps of the Man of Sorrows, this

peculiarly the case with the evening of Good Friday and the quiet hours of Easter Eve. When we have watched with patient faith each several throb of pain in the unrivalled Agony of the Lord, when we have listened for each dying word—strong with even more than the ordinary depth and breadth and height of the words of Jesus—so awfully universal is the power of the Passion, so entirely does that tremendous tragedy annihilate the limitations of Space, and break the laws of Time, that we sigh one long sigh of relief when the hour of Jesus' death has come, and we know that the worn soul and lacerated body at last, at last are at rest.

The Good Friday evening has a sense of solemn calm. Like a summer sunset after a day of tempest, the rays of light that fall across the landscape seem scarcely to travel, they rather lie and sleep: the torn leaves of the trees are hanging in quiet languor, worn out with the struggle; the very sky is still, no sign of motion except where some stray fleck of ragged cloud is sailing slowly on the wind, glistening in the sunset, torn from the wings of the storm.

There is a stillness in the mind of Christendom that nay be felt on Good Friday night and Easter Eve. Why? Because the Leader of His people has led us hrough the mystery of dying, and is standing by us ointing the eye downward into the mystery of the rave. Ah, me! however hurrying may be our day of abour, at least, at least by the side of that resting-

place we cannot but think with closed lips and tearful eyes on the impenetrable enigma of another life.

The Burial of Jesus was full of sadness; it was a striking funeral. The struggle was at an end. The powers of darkness had done their worst upon the Son of Man. Centuries of concentrated anguish had rolled on in each beat of Time through the hours of the Passion. But it was all over now, and those who in life had feared to confess Him, in death had abandoned fear. The great shock of separation had done its work, as it often has since done it all too late, awakening the soul to perception of lost opportunities and rousing the great strong love of the human heart to stand undaunted face to face with danger, by the inspiring yet maddening presence of one loved and dead.

Joseph and Nicodemus came to do the last kind offices. They drew the piercing nails, they unfastened the lacerated feet; gently they lifted down the racked and distorted form, and prepared it for the tomb. Were others there? Did Peter's great love and bitter sorrow not draw him to the garden? Could John bear to be away when they laid the Dead to His rest? Who knows? There are times when to be confronted with the awful evidence that those we love are gone is too much except for the sacredness of lonely tears. Perhaps they mourned alone. Certainly some of the Maries came soon after to see with woman's sweet solicitude "*how* the body was laid."

The loving tenderness of Christian art has ever connected Jesus in His Burial with His mother's heart-broken love; and Michael Angelo's "Pietà" in the Basilica of the Vatican, and Fra Bartolomeo's entombment in the Pitti, and the great sacred Francia in our own gallery in London, have their sentiment from the quiet agony of the heart-broken mother in contrast with the unconscious, unrecking stillness of the Dead. She surely *must* have been by the grave; however, whether there or not, either by the spot or alone in the paralysis of crushing sorrow, what an image—that sight—of many a woman since, who has knelt in anguish by a dear dead form, close to it, or, though far away, in a realizing spirit, and felt the tremendous, the unfathomable misery, "Those lips will never speak to me again!"

They laid Him to His rest. The city sounds upon the winds of night swept over that strange grave; the noise and confusion of life might be near it, but here there was peace. It was a solemn funeral, but it was a "blessed burying." It was *one* of the fruitful mysteries in the experience of the Incarnate; it had, it has its teaching and its power. It is for this reason that among the sacred facts directly revealed to the great Apostle *this* has its place. "I have delivered unto you that which I also received," says St. Paul,—gazing into the gloom of death, and over it to glory,—"that Christ was buried."

I ask a question then, and the answer can be only partial, can touch only the outer, the moral, social re-

sults of this fact, not, of course, its unseen supernatural power.

The question is this, Why was He buried?

I.

Death, so the Christian knows for certain, is an act of solemn separation. The undying spirit has quitted for some new method of existence its mortal home. Let it stay within that earthly dwelling-place, breathe in the breath, speak with the lips, act in the nervous hands, flash from the living eyes: *then* the mortal frame borrows from the immortal spirit its gift of immortality. But death has come, the cruel king has wrenched asunder those fast-united friends. Death has come and tossed aside the frail form to decay. The thought is unbearable. "Is this the end, is this the end?" In view of such a possibility nothing more saddening than the burying-place of the creature; but since that Good Friday funeral Christ's Burial has sanctified the grave.

Henceforth, my brother, the grave to the Christian is a witness to the meaning and limit of the great separation.

Certainly to us who are left behind, and in fresh remembrance of the dead we love, the separation is sufficiently awful. It is something, it is *everything*, to read in the act of the Representative Man what must be

meant. Well, the souls of the dead are robed in mystery: sometimes—ah, me!—how dim, how distant, how blended with mists, how shrouded in cloudy circumstance of dreams! But this at least is clear, there is some special force in the separation for the ennobling of the body; some peculiar power for developing the energy of the soul.

As to the soul of Jesus, on the night of His Burial, how strange its history! That history included, to use human language, a journey to the place of the ancient dead. To those souls, waiting, watching, guarded in the darkness or the half light of the prison home, came the Blessed Human Spirit of Jesus, teaching them the great good tidings and dispelling the gloom. *He* preached a mighty mission during the waiting of the grave, and *they* grasped the truth and were changed. And the same effect is taught elsewhere in Scripture: we learn in St. John's Revelation how the blessed souls beneath the throne developed in their unearthly waiting an astonishing energy of yearning desire.

Life is a deep as well as an awful mystery, but where is the mystery of life so deep as when seen in the half-light of the grave? The calm majestic roll of the Atlantic in the untroubled noontide of the autumn day gives no whisper of the beds of coral and the variegated loveliness of shells, tangled and tossed, lying fathoms deep beneath, among the gleaming forests of the sea. In the grey rainy afternoon of northern

England we forget that above the canopy of
and the restraining covering of the clouds there ε
away, if only we could discern them, impene
depths of dazzling blue. Let the storm come,
and reveals the treasures of the sea. Let the
breeze come sweeping before it the shrouds of v
it reveals how far stretching are the reaches of the
sky.

Deeper than the sea, higher than the heavens,
human soul. Death is like the breeze and the
It reveals, it changes all. Surely it is blessed
reminded that hints and whispers here heard ir
which we have loved may, by the energy of thes
of mysterious separation, be realized realities; thi
earnestness of desire, *that* strength of pure affectic
nobility of aim, *that* harmony and sweetness of ı
scarcely dreamed of by the outer world, only
noticed by the keen tact of strong sympathy;—
these in their hour of separation may be develop
a true activity by the Presence, by the action of
Blessed it is to remember that the fair progress
soul in grace is not arrested but stimulated by the
Why, how, apart from bodily condition this can b
can tell? But it is a consoling thought to have t
hope that so it is witnessed by the solemnity
grave.

And so with the body, the frail partner of th
Nothing can be more striking than the complete

contrast between the form of the Crucified before and after the tragedy of the Cross. Before, indeed, there was the simple dignity which by right belonged to the Fairest of the fair; once and again—on the Mount of Transfiguration, or on the Ephraim road as He marched to His Passion—a superhuman majesty was felt and seen bursting forth beyond the bounding conditions of His body of weakness and pain; but after the transforming hours of the rest in the tomb, the simplicity had not changed, but the dignity and majesty were manifested more, so that His Presence inspired perpetual awe. And most of all, while there was a perfect identity (the same dear shattered form, marked by the sanction of the five sacred wounds as still the same), yet how changed in texture and condition! What freedom from the possibility of suffering; what a strange lightness and beauty, like the glory of the dawning morning after a night of storm; what swiftness of life and movement, as if of an immaterial world; what subtilty of texture, such as to pass unheeded the closed doors and the sealing stone, belonged to that spiritual substance of the body of Jesus after it had passed through the sleep of the tomb! The meaning of the great separation surely is that the soul and body of the child of God, like the soul and body of the Redeemer, passing through the mystery of death, shall be changed and yet the same.

Brethren, in view of those who are dear to us, we

shrink from the thought of *change*. But the change of the grave will be like the transfigured reality of Jesus in the tomb; what is weak or saddening gone, what has moved the love of our hearts, even in this world, abundantly there. Awful in Jesus, awful in ourselves, is this great separation, but blessed that it means a power of enlarging life and increasing beauty. It is *this* truth, this in our Master, in ourselves, that gives an awfulness and yet a comfort to the mystery of the grave.

2. And there is a hint in the entombment of Jesus of the limits of that separation. It cannot last. It is sometimes objected that there is wanting one essential condition in the perfection of the human experiences of Jesus, since it was with Him but a three days' sleep, that His flesh "saw no corruption." There *is* a difference in the manner and degree of the Lord's human experience and our own, but the essential points of resemblance are the same; the differences are always such (as, for instance, the method of His temptation in a sinless nature) as arise from the necessity of the hypostatic union. True, He lay but the three days in the grave, and we may lie for centuries; true, there was in His sacred form nothing but the stillness of unbroken sleep, and that form was all through its hours of rest adorable, because it was the body of God; and for common men who die

"Corruption its sad perfect work has done."

Such is the necessity of the Divine nature; such the prerogative of the Representative of our race; but more, what does that *short* sleep of Jesus teach? This; the great separation has a limit. The strange dark sleep of death is the prelude to a resurrection morning.

II.

And again, the burial night of the Redeemer gives a tender touch of sentiment to the grave. Nor is this wrong. Sentiment, when true, is like the poetry of life expressed in painting, the deeper emotions in artistic material. It is feeling, deep true feeling, thrown into the forms of fancy or imagination. False sentiment is never so detestable as in Religion. But Christianity, because it is (to borrow a phrase used in another sense) "the enthusiasm of humanity"—Christianity, because it is a religion of Divine everlasting realities—Christianity, because it is not for a nation or a race but for man—Christianity rouses the deepest feelings and expresses them in sentiments of Beauty, as the deep and massive energy of the ocean flings up the sun-bespangled spray. There is a sweet touch of the real truth of things expressed in a pure poetic sentiment, in the Christian certainty that Death is Sleep. Now the calm majestic rest of the Redeemer is the evident

witness that there is *this* mystery in the grave. It is the sleeping-place of the weary.

Yes! have you not felt it by the resting-ground of the blessed dead?

Have you ever turned away from a closing tomb on a chill windy afternoon of a February day? The trees above you are sobbing to the rising wind; the grass is dank, the skies are weeping, the rolling masses of interminable mist—you cannot call them clouds—are hurrying onward before the increasing gale—like a flying army, with unending numbers, in unabating fear—the swirling blasts come in fitful dashes laden with drenching rain. The church is dark, no ray of light, no sound of voice or organ, only the plash of gusty drops upon the gloomy panes; the church tower gains a giant immensity from the enwrapping shrouds of gloom. Have you laid one to rest whose life had long been almost half your own? whose absence must rob sunshine from the grass and glory from the flower, and tone with something of a blackening shadow the sunniest days you henceforth know? Have you turned away dazed, silenced, with a feeling not all unlike despair?

Or have you waited with the bands of fellow-mourners round a vault some quiet bleak November evening? Have you heaped the fair flowers on the coffin, and joined as best you could in words of Christian thankfulness and hymns of Christian hope, and still felt with unspoken anguish as you wandered home that this

world had lost a blessed treasure not to be replaced—for the soul has an *individual* loveliness—since a life of such blessing and beauty was gone?

Or have you knelt on some fair spring morning by the freshly-sodded grave of one called all too early to the unexperienced mystery of another world? The sun is up, the flowers are waking, the trailing ivy leaves are brushing the grasses of the grave. Sweet light is round you, soft sounds are in your ears, the light of morning changing the dancing waves into a confusion of sparkling gold, wrapping the old grey church in glory, making the unbending yew-tree glad; the sound of joyous birds, of busy breezes, of lapping waves whose soft strange cadence speaks in alternate *andante* and *adagio* the murmurous music of the sea. The light will not blind away the remembered image of a shrouded face, the sound will not silence the sad and loving accents of a silent voice. You cannot stifle sorrow, you cannot altogether bid back to their hidden chamber the tribute of your voiceless tears. Even though you say—

> "Better so, the world in proving
> Might have soiled him with its breath;
> Surely God, in dearly loving,
> Gave him young His gift of death"

—you *say* it, but how hard it is to *feel!*

If ever thus, what have such graves been to you? Each a symbol of a closed career. Round each have

clustered in the hard insistance of the Present the tender memories of a buried Past. You are overwhelmed amid the evidence of what *is*, with the stunning thought of what *might* have been. You are an actor in the tragedy of Regret, and the refrain in the soul, like the strophe and antistrophe of the old Greek Chorus, is—

> "What has been has been sweet and fair,
> And this can be no more."

Surely *then*, if ever, to the Christian with a mind at such a moment governed by the Mystery of the Burial, all depth of sorrow, all fierce assaults of feeling, all saddening sentiment, cannot but lead straight to an eternal fact, the only ground on which in such extremity to stand and be strong—"They rest from their labours."

Yes, life is labour, and labour is the true though transfigured consequence of the Fall, and those who "sleep in Jesus" are called to achievement; cut off early "like a flower," or gathered in onward years like "the garnered autumn sheaf," they have ended their earthly duty, their work is done. Their graves are symbols of faithful service,—sleeping-places of the weary. Ah! as you love them you would not call them back again. Such is the solemnity, the blessedness, of the Mystery of the Grave.

III.

Why was He buried? In His grave He paused until the Easter morning. Hence the grave is the waiting-place for the great awakening.

That great awakening shall surely come. Such is the Christian's hope, I had rather say—because he walks by faith—the Christian's certainty.

The Catholic Faith proclaims "the resurrection of the body." What does it mean?

It means that for every child of man the hour is coming when the body—the frail and crumbling temple of the soul—shall pass from the home of corruption to conditions of an evident and sensible existence, endowed with movement, gifted with life; the form will be the same as in the days of the old life long ago. And if it be asked by what power this overwhelming miracle is wrought, the answer is, in apostolic phrase, by "the glory of God."

It is true that *this* was not a truth in the Christian Revelation altogether new to men. Undoubtedly the prophecy of Daniel expressed it in some measure, if not the poetry of Job; doubtless also Martha evidenced a knowledge of such a truth when she conversed with Christ not far from her dead brother's grave. But it was Christ Who "brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel;" and it was also

—witness His countless miracles of raising the dead, witness, above all, His own rising, and the palmary proof to Thomas from the discovery in the risen body of the gashes of the Passion—it was also Christ Who clearly taught and evidenced the fact that *the body* shall rise again, whilst He also evidenced the truth in His own Divine person that in very deed it must die.

That death may be sad, may be tragic. It is. The heart sinks and withers beneath the thought that the form so dear to it, so expressive of the light and beautiful soul, should be, must be, the slave of corruption. But this at least is a consoling consequence. If *the whole* man has had to pay the penalty of sin, the body in its dissolution, the soul in its disembodiment, Reason herself demands, what Revelation asserts, that *the whole* man should share the victory—the body by a splendid reconstruction, the soul by restoration to its ancient home. God's promise of man's entire beatitude is a pledge that this article of the Christian creed is true.

For after all man is a personal being. He belongs in a sense to two worlds—to matter and spirit—but *he* is one. It was the glory of Christianity to bring this truth into sunlight which so long had been in shade. So the Christian Church became a great reformer, commanding, as the Apostle had done, that "all men" should be honoured, the ground of *that* respect being not any special gift or power, but the common gift, the universal possession of a personal human life.

The Greek mind, overmastered by the sense of beauty, yet distorted by a failure in its grasp of personal being, was guilty of a grave inconsistency. To it, indeed, the human form was in very truth divine. Thus an extravagant reverence for physical beauty marked the Hellenic people. Now and again a great mind like that of Socrates could rise high enough to sneer at his own ugliness, but even he could not refuse to pay the wild homage to personal beauty that sometimes ennobled, sometimes debased his race. And yet it was from the same race, whose workmen wrought, whose commonest admired, the Athene, the Aphrodite, the Apollo, that sprang the thought that the only sufficient explanation of the existence of evil was the theory that it is *inherent in* matter. Hence came the notion that the same applies to man. He is in part composed of material substance; this, on such a supposition, is the source of man's sin. To men so thinking the grave could mean the only escape from evil, and *that* at the expense of *personal* life; for the part which grew from the Divine reason then, according to them, returned to its source, and the part that sprung from matter melted into the realm of nothingness through the channel of a swift decay.

The truth is, each one of us is a living *person.* Standing in a hidden valley amidst the deepening darkness and the sweeping clouds of this mysterious world, we strain our eyes through the night to catch

a glimpse of the mountain peaks, sharp, clear, as we hope, against the dawn. But as yet the east is not aglow with glory, and we cannot see; we talk of the mountains and the shadows, but where one ends and the other begins we scarcely know, or if it is all mountain, or if it is only shadow. We talk of soul and body. It is convenient, it draws attention to the truth that man *is* made for two worlds, but how little do we know what "soul," what "body" means! Each one of us is *one;* at death the individual being suffers the sharpest shock, but we have no reason to think that it can destroy our personal being, therefore none to expect it to be the end of the body. We know little of the ultimate elements of its texture. The most skilful chemist, or the most skilful anatomist, is pulled up short with a sense of failure before the mystery of LIFE. *How* this hand is mine to-day, and so has been ever since I was born, while yet no particle of matter remains in it now, I suppose, that was in it then, *this* is difficult to explain. "The presence of the soul," you say, "maintains the identity in the midst of change, as certain fixed conditions of social relationship keep intact the idea of a *nation,* when every individual has given way in the course of a century to entirely different men." But in so saying you are after all only *illustrating* a mysterious fact in physical nature by a stern and observed tendency to fixity of idea in the human mind. It *explains* nothing. How do you know it is the presence of life or the activity

of the soul that secures the identity? What knowledge have we of the elements of the body, we know just the observed phenomena and *nothing* more.

There may be an underlying identity that we do not see. The Church does not trouble herself with any details about particles of matter; about its mysterious onward march in bodies she has nothing to say; but she *does* assert continuous identity, and she has on her side two important teachers—(1) The affections and yearnings of the human heart; and (2), which is more to the point, Divine Revelation.

(1) There is an infinity about pure human affection which points to another life. Here we have time enough given us just to have great hopes and strong loves, and then what seemed so stable has vanished like a morning dream. They vanish, they do not end. Our Blessed Master by the very nobleness of His teachings taught immortality, for no merely earthly life is long enough to act out the principles of Christ. God has given us too strong a social instinct, and too keen a power of loving, for us *not* to be immortal. Now your friends who are gone were loved by you *themselves*, not a part but all; it is that indivisible personality, body and soul, that you desire to meet again, with only *such* change as fits for immortality; weakness, defect, infirmity gone, and the soul, once sorrow-laden, now free from its burden of trouble, and "the body of humiliation," developed by grace into its intended loveliness, changed by

Divine working, and "fashioned like unto the body of His glory.

Affection demands it. Does that demand count for nothing in evidence? So we are told by a modern school. With these, Christianity is forsaken for Stoicism without the excuse or the dignity of the Stoics. This gospel is tricked out with æsthetic sentiment and preached in fine phrases, but its last word of consolation for man is this dirge of despair; "felt *here* the weariness of life, the failure of happiness, the loss of friends, if it teaches you anything, it teaches you to fear, to expect the same elsewhere." Does it? Such a gospel will do for gross dilettanteism, well-to-do, sensual, self-pleasing, and of the earth earthy; but the practical instincts of pure affection and noble aspiration point imperiously to a better world. As well say that the evidence of the affections goes for nothing, as that the robin's song does not speak of autumn, or the coming swallow of the spring; as well say your strong desire for happiness with those you love, your deep longing for continued converse with souls blessed and beautiful, but gone, goes for nothing, as that discord in resolution does not delight you because it teaches of the coming mystery of harmonious union, or that the first faint shafts of the eastern colour do not herald the morning dawn.

(2) Better still, Revelation. "Them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him." And best of all, *the* Revela-

-the quiet form on Good Friday night, the risen on Easter Day! As certainly as sleep implies ıg, so—since Jesus was buried and rose again—ave means resurrection from the dead, means, in ıat here we work and there we wait, wait for the ıwakening, *this* is the solemnity of the Mystery Grave.

IV.

hren, three practical thoughts. With eye fixed the risen Saviour we have contemplated the y of the Grave.

ıt must we remember? Surely this—

he sacredness of the human body: it is the of the Holy Ghost: it has its share of blessing in ıat gift of Christ's Passion,—His life communi-ıo His creature in the Blessed Sacrament. He .f commands us to receive that Sacrament, and ı His command, "*and* I will raise him up at the y;" and the Church prays in the Prayer Book, our *bodies*" may be "cleansed by His Body." ıdy is a part of man's indivisible personality, it ıave some share in our great prerogative, "the of God." We must treat our *own* bodies with ıt restraint, others' in life or death with kindly ness and respectful care; to relieve the bodily in sickness is part of such a duty, and in death

with reverent sorrow to lay the body in the grave. And when by that grave we kneel in silent sadness, let us not forget that "He shall change the body of our humiliation that it may be fashioned like unto the body of His glory."

2. We must remember the conscious vigour of the departed soul. The whole tenor of New Testament teaching and the voice of the Catholic Church are quite distinct on this; the Parables of the Lord, the desires and confident expectations of the saints, above all, Christ's action in His human soul the night He died, all point to this. They live—those blessed ones—a fuller life, brighter than this dim probation; not the fullest, not the brightest, *that* lies before us all, "that they without us should not be made perfect." We have turned away from many a grave "to our work and labour under the sun" with stricken hearts and voiceless tears, as men turn from the sea-rim where they gazed, watching the ship that bore their friends away, straining the eyes in vain at last, for even the faintest speck has vanished, melting into the transforming colour of sky and sea. Well, we must work on. Life here is ours. If sorrow-laden, still for us Christians better, holier, more earnest, more kind if lived under the light of that Divine dawning, under the subduing and consoling thoughts which combine to show the moral power and fruitfulness of the Mystery of the Grave.

3. And then, if this be so, we must *love* those who

are gone. And to love them surely means to pray. Can you speak to your heavenly Father of your dear friend up to the last moments of his life, and then close your lips about that soul for ever? If Christ had commanded such an action we would have striven to obey, but to *do* it surely would have been difficult. Never to speak to God of those we love! Strange habit for a child of God! No. Christ has not commanded. Is it not true that almost certainly when on earth He, in His Humanity, practised such prayer? And more, He taught us to "love one another;" and to love, when we come into converse with God, that is, to pray.

Extravagances, misstatements in former times have confused men's minds on this sweet and solemn subject, and often stifled the voice of prayer. Let us, indeed, guard against what is not true; but no mistakes, no misconceptions need force us to maintain this heartless, as almost pagan silence. The heart that is hot within cries to God—

> "They are not dead the dead,
> Not lost but vanished;"

and in the great communion of saints we help their progress surely, as they help our struggles, by the mystery and the love of prayer. Ah! dear souls gone! may they rest from their labours, rest in peace, and eternal light shine more and more upon them!"

And when we are alone with God, or when we "show His death till He come in the Eucharistic Sacrifice,"

surely we may pray for them. We need not fear to follow the saintly teachers of that Early Church to which our own dear Mother Church of England refers us. Therefore, gazing at Jesus,—risen, glorified, once sleeping in the grave,—let us not be unmindful to pray for the dead.

I pause. Life is full of blessing, but full of sorrow. Love is glorious, but partings are powers of crushing pain. Life is weighted with severe thoughts, "labour," "struggle," "battle," "disappointment," "defeat." Severe! They become bracing and blessed when the eye is fixed on Him "Who liveth and was dead," for so they can be borne in the strength of other memories as real and more lasting than they. *These* are voices from another world, *these* are whispers from a better land, *these* are consolations when we think of others, invigorating thoughts for ourselves. "Sleep" after weariness, "rest" after labour, "peace" after storm and struggle, above all, to be "with Christ" the Ideal, the sympathizing Sufferer, the Saviour, the Friend; these truths soften and illuminate the solemnity, the Mystery of the Grave.

SERMON VIII.

THE MYSTERY OF LOYALTY—THE MASTER AND THE SLAVE

The Mystery of Loyalty—The Master and the Slave.

"*Paul the slave of Jesus.*"—ROMANS i. 1.

CHRISTIANITY has revolutionized the world. If it has not created civilization, it has altered, purified, exalted its tone. It did so above all by teaching what was never known before, the value and dignity of man as man. How was this done? By the Mystery of the Passion. Whenever the eyes of any were opened to see the meaning and majesty of Christ, opened, further, to realize the relation of His work to themselves, opened to know the sacredness of every soul for whom He died, then they learned something of that which transfigures life, a sincere unselfish devotion.

There is one instance on record of the Power of the Passion which exhibits in the highest degree the transforming vigour of the love of Jesus Christ—that instance is St. Paul; and the imperial sway exercised upon him by Christ crucified is shortly, forcibly expressed in the text—"Paul the slave of Jesus."

It is thus that he begins the longest and most elaborate of his apostolic letters; the one upon which, we may dare to say, his fame as an accurate thinker, a profound theologian, and a writer inspired to reveal the deepest mysteries, most entirely hangs.

Now such a beginning is noteworthy for two reasons, first, because he is not availing himself of a merely conventional title, but rather employing a phrase of a special and exceptional force, a phrase carefully considered and deliberately chosen, which seems certain when we remember the fact that only one other of his epistles opens in precisely the same way. And again, because in both cases the Apostle is addressing those who, fully in Rome, and in some measure in Philippi, understood the proud position of Roman citizenship—belonged, as we should say, to the dominant caste.

The Gospel, however, had spread through every rank of society; it numbered amongst its subjects high and low alike, and so in these two cities there would be in a special sense those who by their exceptional dignity understood in a wide sense the term of "Master," as well as those who, to their personal sorrow, could not fail to realize the peculiar position of a "slave."

I take it, then, that with that vigour of belief and completeness of intention on which depends all true force in the words of any man who teaches his fellow-men, the Apostle opened his letter to the Romans by describing himself as "Paul the slave." Dwell for a moment on

the title; the language is strange and strong. This man gives of himself an almost contemptuous description, and gives it, be it remembered, to the proudest people in the world. What the *idea* was which he intended to convey there was no room for mistake. The spectacle of a Roman triumph, and the common and piteous sight of the Roman slave-market, were sufficiently familiar to those to whom he wrote, and the ordinary structure of society, as we have seen, in Rome made the full meaning a distinctly realized conception. Complete defeat, followed by complete despair, with what remained of a precarious life, offering opportunity for little else than degradation and sorrow, such would be the Roman notion attaching to the title of "a slave."

And then think for a moment of the man who thus voluntarily places himself in the ranks of the conquered. Brought up a Pharisee, early taught that mixture of severity and ostentation, of liberality in doctrine, and coldness in contact with fellow-men, of high but earthly longings, and jealous preservation of class distinction, which marked the narrowest and most influential of Jewish sects; by his very training inclined to be proud, jealous, cold, hard, strict, unsympathetic, severe, uncompromising —a Jewish Puritan; to this must be added the possession of learning, and a consequent sense of superiority, —was ever man less likely to submit willingly to the place of a slave? In this man we know that conscience

swayed. It might be ill-informed, but it did restrain and guide. To think a course of action wrong would have been in him to decline it, to think it right would have been to pursue it with uncompromising directness. This too, good in itself, does not fail also to minister to pride by supplying a sense of unbending rectitude. Born in Tarsus, educated in Jerusalem, educated too by one who bore a name of traditional celebrity, he took an eager and influential share in the controversies of his time; he disputed with the martyr Stephen, saw his majestic bearing, heard his powerful words on the trial for his life, voted for his death, and assisted at his execution. His direct and unflinching character had launched him on a course of persecution of the followers of Jesus. Then there is a sudden break, a complete, a root-and-branch revolution. The Christians he despised became his brethren; the Lord he reviled his Master. The aim, the meaning, the temper of life is altered; the character is in part deepened, in greater measure changed; and all is summed up, all this new attitude, this sudden and complete revolution, by the description which summarizes his position, principles, and character as "Paul the slave."

In this phrase, my brothers, is brought out one special feature of Christianity. On some points of morality or even of doctrine the religion of our Master may seem to approximate very closely to systems of

human origin, but it is the truth involved in this phrase —what I may call the personal action of Christ—which makes all the difference conceivable.

I.

What, then, does the Apostle mean? He means to express his actual relationship, and that, therefore, of every sincere follower of Jesus, to the Crucified Master. What was that relationship?

1. Well, first, it implies complete submission of will to the commands of Christ. What those commands are, or what they mean, may be a matter, in part at least, of question; but the point of importance is that once discovered, or once, in any degree, convincingly interpreted, they are to be unhesitatingly and entirely obeyed. Certainly the *application* of the principles taught by Christ may at times appear difficult, but to be a Christian is to strive to overcome the difficulty; and for this we may reckon upon the promised help of the Lord Himself.

"Judge not, and ye shall not be judged," may be a rule of such a kind that at times it seems hard to say where we use the faculty of decision between right and wrong, which use we must, and where we are trenching on the office of the sovereign adjudication; but it is the business of the Christian to endeavour, using the lights

given him, to see the dividing line, and so far as he se it, absolutely to obey. A course of action being difficu does not free us from responsibility. To waken up this necessity is, like Paul, to come face to face with t completed picture of a King.

It has been said of the Irish, of the Gaelic race that "a Celt craves for a king." It has a wider reach– that saying. It is true of all mankind. We are, alas born rebels, because we cannot find Him, or findin misunderstand, or understanding, from sheer perversit dislike and disobey. But a true King for us there i Once He was seen on earth in the garb of a Galilea peasant. Paul saw Him in His royal beauty—"Kin of Glory." And He was revealed—a better revelatio —*in* the soul of the Apostle.

What a glorious vision! One Who understands ma and supplies his wants, Whose sway is imperial, bu Whose laws meet and fulfil the deepest yearnings of th soul, Who issues edicts because their result is blessin Who is kind and tender, loving and strong; to Whor the wronged may turn for justice, the sorrow-laden fo peace. To disobey such is to make life a scene c slaughter. Obey Him and the prophet's dream become for the obedient soul the most complete reality, "th wilderness and the solitary place blossom as the rose."

The entire surrender of the will to such obedience i marked in the Apostle's self-chosen title, "Paul the slave."

2. And again, there is involved in such a title entir

submission of judgment to the Revelation of Christ. To accept Christ at all is—so it teaches us—to accept Him as the absolute truth. Hard sayings, deep and mysterious doctrines, strange supernatural statements came from His lips and from His mind. To accept these in so far as they accord with our preconceived notions, or suit our tastes and wishes, is scarcely to accept them at all. The doctrines of grace are deep and mysterious; the truth of the Atonement is an unfathomed truth; men have spent much labour, and "darkened counsel" by many words, in explaining in various senses the Christian doctrine of "Justification;" and faith before now has been wrecked by debate and controversy on Christ's assertions as to the punishment of sin. What these mysteries *mean* we have to learn by learning how the Church of our Master has accepted and explained them, or if not fully explained (because in human words inexplicable), we must content ourselves with accepting with a loving faith. But the revelations given by our Master of His Work, His Presence, His Sacraments, His constant love, His loving assistance of His people, His final judgment, His life in glory,—these relate to *each*, on *each* soul they have a bearing. To hold ourselves in submission to His Revelation is *the* attitude of mind suited to His followers; to *that* tone of thought more light is given, and "spiritual things are spiritually discerned." To remain sometimes unsure of the exact meaning, and willing to learn, is the part of the humble and the

uninstructed, but that there is *some* meaning, and wherever it *is* cleared to us there and at once to accept it; not to question and turn away because the saying is "hard," that is, because its *full reach* is mysterious, though its *statement* is clear—this is to stand in true relationship to the revelations of Christ.

My friends, we live in days when some would teach us to measure the reality of any revealed truth by its accord with conscience. Conscience is a guide in human conduct—a sovereign guide; a revealer or expounder of Divine Revelation it is not. Conscience, for instance, cannot decide on the truth of the doctrine of the Trinity, on the sacramental Presence, or the mystery of the Atonement; they rest upon Divine Revelation. And even in cases where our moral sense necessarily insists on being heard, we must remember two facts which restrain us from entire reliance upon its verdict, namely, (1) that conscience itself is often darkened or disabled by sin; and (2) that in the deeper mystery of God's dealings with souls *we* have not the full data before us in this life of probation. Anyhow, to rebel against "hard sayings" is not Paul's idea of true relationship to Christ: *that* he would put down with his "who art thou that repliest against God?" Entire submission to the revelation of the Master is implied in his title, "Paul the slave."

3. And further, the phrase before us includes and covers an entire and earnest effort to imitate the life of

Christ. Why did St. Paul feel this to be a necessity? Because that life was itself a Revelation. St. Paul, like others, might naturally and reasonably have set about, during his earthly life, to "make the best of both worlds;" to seek *self*, in fact, to seek it in a manner not altogether ignoble, to seek it in fair efforts for advancement, and honourable distinction, and the prudent indulgence of legitimate ambition. For a time, indeed, this he did. Why should he not? Why should not many of meaner moral stature than himself do so, as they do? There is only one *real* answer; and "the children of this generation" would do well to lay that answer to heart. Other answers are being daily given; dreamy codes of morality are substituted for the code of the Christian Church; men admire self-denial too much altogether to surrender it, but they demand it without supplying its only real source and sanction. Paul sought *self* until an era came in his history. What was that? Christ crossed his path. He had taken one view of life, and it was the wrong one. Here, in spite of all the world's assertion to the contrary, here was the best, the noblest, the happiest life, the life modelled upon the example of Christ.

Yes, and here it is still. How different from what we imagined! How hard to grasp, and realize, and love this severe yet splendid truth! The *circumstances* have changed since Christ lived, the *principles* remain. If "modern Christianity" be "a civilized heathenism," it is

not because the imitation of Christ is impossible. Certainly it must be imperfect, terribly imperfect; certainly your apostles of despair have too good an excuse for representing it as non-existent, but this is only either because some who name Christ's Name decline to attend to His teaching, or else it is seen under wholly new *conditions*, or may be, if they choose to open their eyes. But failing or successful, here is *the* revelation of true life. Oh, life of Jesus! oh, toil and weariness, poverty and hiddenness! what, what lay within, what is shown, what should be learned by us all? All summed up in one word, "*self-sacrifice*."

That life, however varying its incidents, led at last to the Cross. And to learn *self-sacrifice* by imitation of the Master, and for "His dear sake," is for the Christian to make his name a reality, to advance in the track of the best and noblest life, to stand towards his Redeemer in that attitude of entire surrender which the Apostle indicates when he calls himself "Paul the slave."

And here I pause to ask the question, What is your line in life? "A servant you are to whom you obey;" and your obedience will be regulated by that object of imitation and attainment to which your desire is turned. Is it pleasure you are searching for? To seek it is, proverbially, to scare it from your path; and if found in any degree, how soon it palls upon the satiated soul! Is it reputation? Ah, me! it is a mere bubble shining for a moment in a gleam of sunlight, then bursting and

gone. Is it riches? Indeed this whole huge city seems above all things in such degree to have set before it *that* goal of attainment, that it may seem an impertinence from the pulpit to traverse so universally accepted a pursuit, and for life in every sphere so necessary is money, that not to seek for it may be deemed the part of an unpractical dreamer. Well of course I do not speak of the honest earning of an honest livelihood, that is, as Scripture teaches us, a Christian's duty; but men *do* make an end of what ought only to be a means; and when we pass in the hurry and business of our daily life, on the highway, where the cabs and the omnibuses carry day by day the masses of the living past the churchyard railings which mark off the resting-places of the dead, the very headstones seem to give the lie to the asserted duty of this feverish pursuit of wealth, and remind us that "we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out." Nay, more. What is dearer, what more beautiful than family life? If ever the weary worker may find an *end* and an *object* in his work, it is to create around him those objects of love which elevate and soothe. And yet they die. Graves, little graves, are all that some of you have left instead of those bright faces and sweet voices which made the nursery a rest to the toiler after his day of work: graves, green graves, are all that some of us have remaining instead of those living friends whose very life seemed to make much that was bright and blessed in our own.

The object of life is to prepare for the creature's lasting home, and to help all others in that preparation. We live—it is scarcely false to say it—that we may die. Our effort should be to grow in one image and likeness; in all work, in all rest, in all sorrow, in all rejoicing, to try to follow one example, to be "the slaves of Jesus Christ."

4. And then chiefly the expression of the Apostle reveals that one attitude towards the Redeemer that is suitable in a soul which has sinned.

Which of us does not waken sooner or later to the oppressive sense of the presence of sin? When to that we are fully alive, when the heart is heavy and the spirit crushed, how little do the arguments with which before we cozened ourselves when sinning *then* avail! We want—and we feel that we want—a Redeemer. It is then that Jesus Christ is precious, unspeakably, incalculably precious to the soul. To waken to that great truth to which Paul wakened—"loved *me*, gave Himself for *me*"—is to become the willing, loving slave of the Redeemer.

II.

Two consequences at least of this Christian view of active submission to the teaching, work, and life of Jesus Christ are of the greatest moment. (1) It points to a large and loving recognition of all who name the Holy

Name; and (2) it affects in a very serious sense the attitude of the individual life.

1. First we are reminded of that most comforting truth that *all* who are baptized Christians are baptized into the Catholic Church.

In days like our own, when around us we see so many who by the accidents of birth are, through no fault of their own, separated in outward communion from ourselves, it is surely a comfort, it surely affords some grounds of hope of restored communion, to remember that whilst living under grievous loss indeed, deprived of the apostolic ministry, and therefore of the true sacraments in later life, they have had, through the Sacrament of Baptism, the gift of Regeneration, and by grace have been united with the Church of the Redeemer. And this is more and more consoling when we recollect that all that is represented by the text is a powerful common bond which still—amidst many and serious differences—unites those who in any real sense are followers of Christ.

"Our common Christianity" is a phrase sometimes dangerous, sometimes, however, true. It is dangerous when it is, as it is sometimes, meant to hint or encourage a doctrine of indifferentism; when it is meant to teach that it matters nothing whether or not we are loyal to all the details of dogma and practice into which the Divine Spirit has guided the Church of Christ. But it is true and consoling when it expresses, that amongst all who

are "baptized into Jesus Christ" there is a shar one main ground of common faith and hope, which unite them more at last than their differences divide.

And then the teaching of any teacher is of course b up with himself. And submission to Christ's teac as far as it is known, is implied in submission to But Christianity has this great and unique featu *centres round* a person and a life. The *interpret* of the Master's teaching may be true, or inadequa false; those who hold and live by the *true* interpret of Christian doctrine—that is, the interpretation o Church of Christ—are of course necessarily near the mind of the Founder of that great society, as are more directly under the blessed influence o promised and perpetual Presence. Cling to the l therefore, "once delivered to the saints." But we remember that those also who hold this Faith inadequately, and that through no fault of their are often bound to us by a very real bond, the bo devotion to His Sacred Person. To love Jesus C even when imperfectly instructed in His will, is brought under an almost sacramental power. "(overflows the sacraments;" and when we reme that the hardness of the rulers of our Church in days led to much that we regret, for instance, in Wesleyan body, and that their persistent stiffness h to stereotype it into an organized schism, we canno

rejoice in meeting many in that or in *any* separated society of Christians who, while under the loss of supernatural blessings which we enjoy, still love the Lord in sincerity, and are in their will and desire the "slaves of Jesus Christ."

In the age we live in new "religions," so called, are substituted amongst us for the Faith of Christendom. A "morality," using Christian phraseology, and pretending to do duty for the teaching of our Master, is loudly preached, and, alas! widely accepted. There is one tremendous difference between the teachers of these and the followers of Christ, and there is at least one strong bond between all who name His Name, viz. the Christian must test all moral teaching, as well as all supernatural Revelation, by the authority of the Church's Founder, he must have some devotion to Jesus our Lord.

We are staggered by instances of lives said to be as morally good as the lives of Christians, in those who do not submit to the claims of Christ.

Of individual cases we are not the constituted judges —"we shall *all* stand before the judgment-seat of *Christ*." But this we can say; those who deny the Master, but profess to hold moral principles as true as His, where have they learned them? They also are heirs to a benefit whose Author they disown. The Christian Church has leavened society, and consequently many who repudiate our Master's dignity and mission, hold

high principles which *He* has taught the world. But further, in the long run this will never last. The position of mind and heart of those who look for an eternal future, and expect to give account to Him "Who is ready to judge the quick and dead," is sooner or later utterly different from that of those who doubt the one and deny the other. We rest on surer ground, we are supported by a stronger foundation, we acquire a loftier tone, as well as learning decision with charity, if we are the "slaves of Jesus Christ."

2. And again, in the individual soul what a change by such submission! We must remember, certainly (indeed all along it has of course been implied), that there is one striking difference between the state of Roman servitude from which the Apostle took his image, and that condition to which it pointed. For any act to be of the dignity suitable to a moral creature it must arise not from mere disposition or natural tendency, it must have its force from the will. No doubt there are some natures which seem, from mysterious causes, suited more than others to the demands and teachings of the Christian Faith. There are in whom natural amiability and inborn gentleness may pass unchallenged for the higher graces of supernatural life. But to be a "slave of Jesus Christ" implies some sacrifice, it implies, therefore, not once but many times the surrender or co-operation of the will. Sooner or later we must *deliberately* choose our master.

If we choose Christ, there follows necessarily a wholly new view of our relation to mankind. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in you all." This is the experience of the proud, the exclusive Pharisee who had made that momentous choice. Whatever be the wide views of nations or of classes, sanctioned by the ordinary customs of human society, to the Christian *each* soul is one related to his Master, and for whom that Master died. Hence springs that new temper, new, since Christ came, designated in a notable phrase, "the enthusiasm of humanity." Hence comes the unflinching stubbornness with which the Christian Church, and every faithful follower of Christ, refuses to sanction any personal, any national morality but such as is based on the recognition of the claims, and rights, and value of every member of the race, and asserts a special bond of Christian charity between every creature new born by Baptism into the unity of the One Fold. The more closely the tie is drawn between ourselves and our Master, the more, like Him, we shall be sure to "go about doing good."

But again, to have constantly before the mind an unblemished ideal, and *that* with the knowledge that all life and happiness, and power and blessing, all fulfilment of duty, and all increase of joy is proportioned to our approach to that ideal; and further, to have learned that abundant help is offered to essay the task, this

must indeed have a powerful effect on character. Y it is indeed from this that springs so often, that spra so fully in St. Paul, that strangest, loveliest paradox i Christian character, resulting in the deepest Christia virtue, namely, a constant, unflagging, increasing aspiration, together with a deepening but not disheartening sense of failure. "To will is present with me, but how to do I find not;" and then, "I thank my God through Jesus Christ."

In the life of the Christian it is when aspiration is high that failure is felt.

From the broad platform of the terrace at Berne the peaks and precipices of the ranges of the Alps are merged by the force of mellowing distance into one jagged, or undulating, or ascending line; draw nearer, and one by one the giant masses rise into individual awfulness and power. The nearer the soul draws to Jesus Christ, the more it realizes the solemn majesty of the Uncreated Beauty; nearer it may be, nearer it is, but more intensely present to its consciousness is the increasing sense of its own nothingness when face to face with Him. It is the source of something of that pilgrim feeling, that most pathetic sense of the greatness of possible attainment and the depth of actual failure, which pervades the mind and literature of Christendom, which pierces the soul of the Christian—this submission to Jesus Christ. It is the very splendour that attracts, and the large knowledge

and tender love that supports the soul before such a standard;

> "All I could never be,
> All men ignored in me,
> That I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped."

III.

But what was the secret spring of such an attitude of mind as seen at its best in the great Apostle?

My friends, in the mind of Paul there was no sort of question as to Who Jesus Christ *was*. That he had had amplest opportunity of examining His claims we know, but no amount of study of prophecy, no insight gained by the lucid expositions of Stephen, no witness by the works of those who had seen the Lord after His Resurrection was enough. The grace of Faith was lighted in the soul of the Apostle, the change that passed upon him was not merely intellectual, it affected his whole being, his will as well as his understanding. Divine *Faith* ruled his life. He recognised Christ as the Eternal God, Who was also the Representative Man, "the first-born of every creature," and recognising this, by the grace given him, he acted on the recognition.

To do this was to live by Faith. Henceforth he directed his course by the visual efficacy of a fresher

and fuller spiritual sense directed upon *the* : the unseen world. That reality was Christ now to be the link between man and God planation of prophecy, the object of patriarch as of Psalmist's song, the Head of the New Cr once the Revelation of God's will and way to the manifestation of man as imaged and int God. That fuller, fresher sense from which a was the Divine capacity of Faith. To subm absolute supremacy of the same Master in each soul the supremacy of the same principle, by Faith."

Now the antagonist of such a principle is t sight. It may mean the habitual inattention t demands of the pleading Spirit, the habitual s to the enervating maxims and lower teachings indulgent age. It may mean complete abso direct self-pleasing, obedience to immediate tion of personal longing, intellectual as well a which St. Paul would have called being addict mind of the flesh."

It may mean a contemptuous disregard interior virtues which are found in their

pride and evil lust within certain limits as not incompatible with "common-sense" religion. But what it certainly and always is, is this: a life spent under an habitual blindness as to the heinousness and horror of sin, the reality and holiness of God, and the importance, the surpassing importance, of the facts and revelations of another world.

The man who lives by the principle of "sight" may be respectable,—society for the most part demands *that*,—he may be in a sense religious, that may be exacted of him by the importunities of a clamorous conscience; but one thing he has not done, he is not doing, viz. seeking to guide his course and govern his actions by habitual reference to an unseen, a loving Friend; he has in no way staked his all upon the promise, and committed his destiny to the keeping of "the Son of God."

To do precisely the opposite is to "walk by Faith." Would you know anything of that splendid slavery? Life then must be governed in smaller and in greater matters by the venturous trustful spirit which is the outcome of a living relation to God.

2. But more than all; as faith was allowed to exercise its sovereign sway, there grew and deepened in the mind of the Apostle an intense, a personal love and loyalty towards Jesus Christ. This lay at the root of his patient study of the mind of his Master, and his unwearying effort to do His work.

It had sprung up within him in a measure at that first vision of the Lord on the summer noonday. Little it mattered to him *then* the exact meaning, the theological definition of the Atonement. Such a meaning, of course, that great act of surrender and of victory *had*, but little it mattered to him *then*. Enough for him *he* was a criminal, bound, wearied, burdened with a crushing weight, with a ponderous chain; that chain none could break but One, that weight none but One was strong enough to bear. To bear it He must be a willing sacrifice, and that He had been. He had bent from the throne of His glory in tender solicitude and condescending pity, in personal passionate affection for this soul, this helpless soul. Paul reeled beneath the force of the revelation, staggered under the pressure of this unspeakable joy. He had groped in confusion along the wayside to Damascus smitten with the thought; he had sat dazed and blinded with the glory of that vision; he had risen amidst the solitudes of Arabia into a heaven brighter than the dazzling spectacle of the Eastern skies, but in his darkness and in his ecstatic rapture he was luminously conscious of two persons—Jesus and Paul. Paul the proud, the self-reliant, the cruel, the arrogant, the presumptuous, the sin-laden. Jesus the Lord of Glory, Who had loved him with unflagging love, and written that love in the blood of the Passion. Henceforth life was changed. Not only was he now baptized into Jesus Christ, but

he rose to the fulness of his regenerate life. The new supernatural principle developed and grew. Life was changed; one vision illumined all; one face lightened all; one sweet memory softened sorrow; one dear Presence shed continual joy; henceforth labour was rest and pain was pleasure; henceforth the snows of the Taurus, the wild regions of Cilicia could not depress, the shrieking mobs of Ephesus or Jerusalem could not affright, the fair scenes of Attica, the soft grace of Corinth could no more seduce. At the tribunal of Cæsarea, in the surging waves of Adria, or marching with the step of a conqueror to the deathplace on the Ostian Way, it was all one. Life had one principle; it glowed with one fire; it was exalted above circumstances, its meaning and vigour stretched beyond the grave. One, the Highest, had thought of him, even *him*. Could he ever forget it? "The life that I now live in the flesh," so he writes, "I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*." Jesus the Conqueror! Paul the slave! A great love had overmastered Paul, and a faithful response was given.

Loyal affectionateness is always beautiful. To see the grey-haired man, worn with the toil of life, hardened by the rough usage of a boisterous world, melting into tenderness at the dear memory of one, once loved, now gone—having once seen, what heart can resist it? To see the little child, sweet, gentle, retiring—flash

into sudden enthusiasm, or grow into sudden gravity of reproof in behalf of an absent parent or friend—the heart is touched, and eyes little used to them will overbrim with tears. Why? It is the sense of the need of hero-worship in our poor low lives, and the beauty of loyalty in man.

Loyalty! It is that spirit which comes of deep veneration, insight into goodness, and respect for truth; of a brave dependence, and a lofty humility; above all, which is overshone by, interpenetrated with the light and heat of human love. Ah, me! the world grows cold and critical: young hearts lose their freshness because they lose their faithfulness; miss their nobility when hero-worship is dead. God save you from the cynical spirit, from the narrow self-concentrated mind—parent of sin! It is the generous spirit that is the brave spirit; because where *it* is there is loyalty. To what? Well, to anything or any one who is in any measure really deserving; in any degree (in this world of partial successes and splendid failures) really true; to your Church, to your Queen, to your country, to a great tradition, to a hallowed memory—loyalty to these leads to the higher.

Think of this. Think what it is for us Christians to have the vision of the highest truth before us, and to fail in loyalty! What follows? Success, money, greed satisfied, *and* the dark heart, the narrow brain, the soul of the self-condemned malefactor more and more

ned to sin, then victim of some Aceldama where light
hope are gone; another Judas the traitor, picture
ty and horror!
ink also, to see the highest truth *and* to be
! Certainly it means some pain, some shame;
er or later the worldly wise, the restrained and
ent, drawn up against you in grim assault; yes,
it means also to open a door in heaven to see
living creatures," to know God. For such the
e and blame of earth are as the sounding of a
nt wind on a night of calm; as the scudding cloud
marks and illustrates the brightness of the dawn.
is full of trial. The world is full of darkness.
by day sin extends and deepens. Snares for the
g are on every side. Who can deliver? No parents'
s, no wise advice can do all: no—believe me—it is
religious principle; some serious loyalty to Jesus
st. For such as have this, ah, there is a guide in
joy in sorrow, a clue to the labyrinth of duty, sun-
in the misty morning, "songs in the night"! To be
to truth, wherever seen, loyal therefore to the King
ith, when known, this was the spring of that proud
ission which formed the character of "Paul the slave."
r by the force of such supernatural grace, and pure
ion, leading to this willing slavery, was built up a
cter—striking from the severe determination of a
ive moral nature, and the deep and even genial
athy of a loving heart; and this, illumined by the

light, and controlled by the power of a stern conviction, and quickened by the force of an affection unearthly, intense—altogether an overmastering fact in life.

Again, that affection drew its nourishment from all principal springs of human love, gratitude, strong and pure for undeserved and unmeasured benefits, respect which rose to adoration, admiration reasoned and refined—all, too, elevated by that sense of awe and submissiveness (which is man's witness to the Presence of God) into a sentiment which in its completeness is possible only between the creature and his Creator—deep and heart-searching *devotion.*

IV.

And finally, what follows? What St. Paul had done that we Christians must do. Paul is certainly in a sense a unique example; an instance of the magnetism of the love of the Redeemer, acting through abundant endowments of grace, upon an unusually rich and gifted nature. Still it was *an example.* The same causes under similar conditions, in spiritual as in physical matters, produce the same effects.

The child Blandina smiled as she went to her agony; the aged Polycarp wept in an ecstasy of tenderness when he thought of the love of his Master, and the horror of

denying One Who so long had loved him. The Greek girl—in a beautiful romance, which is in this point history—lay in the depth of the African dungeon; she had longed for the azure skies of Attica, she had pined for the free breezes of the fresh Ægean, but they found her radiant with joy in her darkness and solitude, and the only account she gave of that strange completeness of revolutionized nature was this, "My Love was crucified."

Such is the power of the Love of Jesus received by the Spirit's teaching into the spiritual consciousness of the Christian; it draws forth the regenerate life of the baptized to the fulness of the measure of the sons of God.

As the Christian life advances, then, in *any* soul the result is approximately the same. The power in all is One. The peculiar spring of Christian excellence, giving to it its tone, its colour, its indefinable grace and beauty, its tenderness and its strength, is supernatural affection for a Man chastened, elevated by worship of Him, being, as His people feel, the very God. That spring is, in fact, a love unique, exalted, unfelt in any religion but one, the Love of Jesus Christ.

My brother, my sister, what lesson, what comfort is there in this for you?

"I am not," you may say, "a St. Paul." "I am not," you may add, "even like the later martyrs; I am a child of the nineteenth century, in an age when

miracles seem to have ceased, when Faith is waning, when 'the world' is strong."

True, very true, but at least you have features in common with the saints and martyrs of the earlier ages.

You are a member of the great human family, of the race from which He, our Master, "took sinful flesh."

You are more, I trust; "baptized into Jesus Christ you have put on Christ."

"Ah!" you say—and truly—"I may be indeed re generate, yet not living the life of 'the sons of God.'"

Not converted? or half-believing? Well, you a further, a sinner, and you want the "peace with Go of an *entire* surrender.

What then? Do I ask of you violent emotion You cannot, you say, "force your feelings." No, n would it be well to do so if you could; faith never can of affectation, nor religion of unreality.

This is no question of feeling but of *fact.* A *fact* before you. Take its measure. Prayerfully, earnestly, the light given by the Spirit of God. What is th *fact?* It is a great thing, it is blessed power, in a measure, in any degree, to say "I love Jesus;" it is greater, a more blessed, and it is an absolute and certa truth to say "Jesus loves *me.*"

I go to Calvary. I see Him before His judge, pa weary, agonized; I follow Him to the hall of mocker they scourge Him till the quivering shoulders a gashed and torn; I tread the path of sorrows; I

staggers in the faintness of failing nature; we are reaching the scene of the Passion; He is waiting to be crucified; they nail the hands with cruel nails, He writhes in unspoken agony; each pain has the strange intensity of an infinite nature. Dear Lord Jesus, so agonized, so beautiful! Why? I know the meaning, then, of the sorrow, "He loved *me*, even me, even *me!*" My brother, my sister, we *each* can say it, and truly.

Think (1) the comfort.

Life is full of failure. Oh, the strong, the vigorous purpose! Where is it? A ghastly, a distressing ruin!

Life is full of sorrow. The morning was bright with promise, it was dull at noonday, perhaps now evening is coming, and the sky is black with clouds. Friends are dead or gone, and our sun sank darkening in their grave; health is failing, energy flags.

Life is full of sin. The darkened understanding, the weakened will, the surrender to evil, and then the heavy weary weight, unpardoned sin.

Listen. He changes not, "He loved *you*, and gave Himself for *you*."

Well, then, if listening, (2) the result.

Surely penitence. Ah! even if long you have turned to Him, for you a *deepening* penitence. That sweet sorrow which revolutionizes life, and reveals its meaning in the joy of angels, its spring is the Love of Jesus crucified.

And more. You will grow, advance, increase in

grace as your surrender becomes more complete. Love of Jesus overshines the Christian life. It m it what it is, a splendid vision.

I remember not long ago on shipboard to I witnessed a parabolic spectacle. I have told c before, I venture to tell it again. It was the e morning as we swept through the Straits of Mes the sky was cloudless, the sea was still, the per half-light of the summer dawn was sleeping on waves of the Faro; just here and there the edd waters marked a spot reminding us of the an Scylla and its twin Charybdis; on the left towered rugged mountains of Calabria, on the right the laug vales and smiling cities of Sicily; above, the dome c azure heaven, below, the far expanse of purple s when suddenly along the waves a light began to s pale, then golden, then deeper crimson, then blood till all the reaches of the heaving Mediterranean see steeped in the brilliancy of crimson and the glo fire.

Whence came it? Of course it was simply the e of the rising sun, hidden from our eyes by the roc Italy. So as we gazed, we thought, we said, "How the life of *a real Christian* illumined by the un Christ!" And so it is. Settle it then in your mind at the heart's core of anything worthy of the nam Christianity there is *some* measure of love and loyalt Jesus Christ. It is the power, the sustaining Prese

the ennobling example, the blessed memory, the saving work of that most dear Redeemer that sheds such a light of unspeakable loveliness on the low life of a sinning creature, and creates and continues that standing miracle, that loveliest spectacle—a Christian life. It is quiet yet earnest, patient yet energetic, zealous yet tender, sad yet full of joy, at common work yet with uncommon ends. It means in one word—*Devotion*, and its spring the Love, the ceaseless Love of Jesus Christ.

One word more. I say *devotion*. Not perhaps the burning enthusiasm of His first followers, that is beyond you and me, or the blind, vigorous courage of the martyrs. We have scarcely grace or strength for that. We need not fly too high, or allow ourselves in overstrained assertions of loyalty. No, no—for indeed many are the degrees of love to the unseen King, from the first faint desire of obedience to the full experience of the great Apostle.

Yet life may be truer, nobler, better, if we keep Him before us; the business man may restrain his speculations when they pass the line of honesty, may spend his money secretly for God; the young city clerk may subdue his passions, teach in the Sunday school, "keep his Sunday;" the fashionable lady may bend the proud rules of social convention with a sweet dexterity, and do self-denying acts in real Christian love; the labouring man may work; the bedridden may endure; each with one thing in common

some *surrender*, that is, some deepening love of heart, and stronger energy of will for love of Him Who gave Himself for them, may learn in their several measures to be "slaves of Christ." Time is short, and souls are needing all our efforts. Time is short, and *we* need deeper repentance, larger, more "eager thoughts of God." O Jesus, Master, where shall I find the spring for a life of faithful service but in Thy love, Who "loved me, and gave Thyself for me."

"My Lord, shall not I love Thee,
Who gave Thy life for me?
The world may tower above Thee,
But Thou art all to me.
As in Thy bitter Passion
I read my hopes above,
I'll pay Thee in like fashion,
And give Thee love for love."

SERMON IX.

THE MYSTERY OF PEACE

The Mystery of Peace.[1]

"These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."—ST. JOHN xvi. 33.

THIS discourse of the Lord is, as you know, almost His final utterance before His Passion. There is so much in it touching the truths of Eastertide and Ascension Day that—reading it as we do in the selected Gospels for the season of the Resurrection—we are apt to forget that it actually and immediately preceded His death. Nevertheless that fact gives it the added interest which belongs, which cannot fail to belong, to the last words of a friend.

But besides; the fact that it is recorded, and the manner in which that record is given, these combine to place it before us as a unique example of the deep insight of inspiration allowed pre-eminently to St. John. He had—as the Church has loved to remember—the gift of the eagle eye. Of the four emblematic beings in the vision of Ezekiel, of the four living creatures in the vision of the beloved Apostle himself, *he* was ever

[1] Preached also, in substance, in the Chapel Royal, Savoy, June 26, 1881.

supposed to be typified by the wild eagle of the deserts and the mountains, who gazed with unhindered directness straight at the sun.

Christian art—following always as it has done where it is worth considering, following always closely on the track of the Christian Faith—has ever thus portrayed St. John. Thus he stands in giant proportions in the choir of Assisi; thus Giotto painted him at Ravenna, keen as the calm and strong-eyed eagle, gentle as the friend whom Jesus loved; thus Massaccio has left him with the other three, simple and beautiful, in the Chapel of the Passion at San Clemente in Rome; thus, too,—only, if possible, even more emphatically, because in the grotesque combination of the symbol and the human form,—Angelico has drawn the Evangelist in one of the panels of his life of Christ in Florence. Many besides did the same. When the Church reached the rich art period of the middle ages, the characteristic symbol of St. John had long been impressed upon the mind of Christendom.

What did the symbol mean?

To St. John had been specially given to see, under His lineaments of toil and sorrow, the Godhead of the Redeemer. He alone of all who knew or worshipped Christ had been permitted to write in words that overwhelming mystery, "THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH." He is the Evangelist of the Incarnation, and therefore of the Sacraments, as well as the dearest human friend of Christ.

Now in this we catch a glimpse of the secret wonder of God's moral preparation of His creatures. Certainly God loves the penitent. Blessed it is for us that so it is. Peter, probably grimed with sin, undoubtedly shattered with a serious moral collapse, had his work to do. But it is the Virgin saint, the sacred friend who had not denied Christ, nor (at least permanently) forsaken, nor betrayed, who saw the deepest into the mysteries of His life. "Blessed, blessed are the pure in heart, they see God." It is a law—oh, do not forget it!—of the Kingdom, fulfilled by gifts of clearer illumination and loftier views of truth, even in the ranks of sanctity.

And further, while the truth recorded by inspired Evangelists is God's truth revealed through them, the manner of its record is, in a sense, their own. That manner depends upon special cast of mind, individual taste, peculiar gifts of nature, as well as particular degrees and shades of inspiration, given indeed—as all is given—by God, but given in accordance with moral and spiritual laws, by which the continued abundance, or degree of excellence of the gift depends upon the anterior faithfulness of him who receives. Unbelief has cavilled at the dictum of Christ, that "to him that hath shall more be given;" but it is only the statement of a moral law, on the existence of which depends our responsibility, and the real and lasting blessedness of doing what is right.

However that may be, St. John seems to have pos-

sessed the faculty of grasping with tenacity prominent thoughts, *and then* their relation to subsidiary and supporting ideas. He is the Evangelist who specially records the sayings or doings of the Incarnate where one fact underlies the whole, where its true bearing is to be taught by hint or statement of some further revelation, where it, and the revelation that expounds its meaning, throw out a tone or temper or atmosphere which affects or colours with brighter light or deeper shadow or greater breadth the entire impression left by the particular Truth.

Of course this is a characteristic of all Revelation, but it is more distinctly evident in the teaching of St. John. Thus no other sacred writer so clearly, and by a thousand delicate touches, leaves with such completeness on his canvas, so to speak, the portraiture of "the world" on the one hand, or on the other of "the Love of God."

To dwell for a moment on this fact in passing; herein it seems to me is a likeness between the mystic gift which we call inspiration and the high endowments known as genius. To both it is given to pierce into the depths of the mystery of *Life*, and to penetrate into and interpret the secrets of the soul. Both rise aloft and carry us with them into a clearer atmosphere, *this* into the higher regions of our nature, *that* into the secret things of God.

This might be illustrated from the arts of poetry, and still more of painting; but to you who are not

unused to the works of the great masters of harmony, it is even more evident in the chief examples of music.

In Handel and in Bach there is a handy instance in the striking development of the Fugue. Am I not right in saying that in it the dignity and teaching of the composition depends upon the master's powerful grasp of one governing theme? It is first stated in a simple fashion; there are in it many adornments, and a multitude of subsidiary illustrations, but amidst all the involutions and evolutions of the intricate counterpoint, the mind receives at last a delighted sense of lofty satisfaction from being fixed on one predominating thought, the force and significance of which are felt and realized by the drawing out of an enveloping atmosphere, and the creation of a general and interpreting tone.

It is scarcely fanciful to say that this method is powerful because there is in it something belonging not to accident but to the essence of things, and that we cannot fail to notice it in the grander scenes and circumstances of external Nature.

I remember, as an example, a remarkable sunset in the valley of Sarnen. It was an evening in the later summer. The sun was westering slowly, and throwing across the lake and nearer ridges streams of mellowing golden light. The long line of the mountains of Engelberg rose peak on peak against the sky. The sky! Not sky behind those mountains, but volumes of vapour,

for mass on mass, pile on pile, rose the tremendous bastions of the clouds. To call them inky black would be to speak in tame and insufficient language. They showed such depth of unimagined darkness, it seemed the very essence of the night. And against this background of elaborated gloom stood clear, as if from a sky of oxide of silver, the peaks and promontories of the mountain world. The effect on the mind was marvellous; the gazer could not but be arrested by the deep, uncanny darkness revealed by the glory of the setting sun. One governing fact was on the mind, one illuminating power, one strange tone, half of physical nature, half of mental vision; the light was the sunset, the tone was a sense of unknown possibilities of doom, the fact was the silent awfulness of the gathering storm.

Now in literature, and here in inspiration, the human mind is affected in such a way. Here, the pervading tone is sorrow, strange, unaccountable, subduing sorrow; here the glow is from the Resurrection, the Ascension, the life of Christ in Glory; here, too, the dominating fact from which the one is drawn, which is illuminated and explained by the other, is the fact of the Passion.

How clearly and constantly that fact was before the mind of Christ is evident from the sacred story. It was always there; always, like some vague half-remembered possibility of horror, toning with sadness our brightest days. *We* have known such, when beyond our light and joyous moments, in the dim regions of memory or

anticipation, we have been only not unconscious of some future, probable trial, or some fading but soon-reviving and everlasting sorrow. Only with *Him* nothing was "half remembered," it was all in the full blaze of a constant unabating consciousness. Did He speak sweet words in the quiet home of Nazareth? did He walk in later life in the fig-shaded paths of Ephraim? did He teach in the Temple? did He rest at Bethany? did He burst forth for the moment into His native glory on the Mount of Transfiguration?—behind all—like Salvator Rosa's background, like the cloud curtains behind the mountains of Sarnen—was the fact of the Passion.

But here in these discourses the *result* was equally evident, and that was, with all its varied incidents of teaching, His perpetual relation to His Church and His people by the active agency of the Holy Ghost.

What was one of those incidents, those details of teaching? One we noticed lately[1]—namely, the significance of the Mystery of Death. To another we turn to-night. What was that?

I.

Well, now, as these discourses were uttered, in the very foreground,—for in a few short hours the first Act of the great and blessed Tragedy would begin,—in

[1] See Sermon VI., preached the Sunday before.

the very foreground *must* have been the Passion. In this, indeed, He was truly the Representative Man; to Him pre-eminently here was the consummation of sorrow in its leading elements, agony for sin, personal suffering, and the crowning pain, the parting of friends.

There are, there must be, my brothers and sisters, in the lives of those who think and those who feel, supreme moments, when the mind clearly sees the certainty of sorrow, and acutely feels how it cuts to the quick. Such supreme moments come either when we are forced to make a necessary, an inevitable, an important *decision*, or compelled to do a hard but imperative *duty* at all costs, or to submit to the extremity of *trial*—to part with a friend.

Such a crisis approached in the lives of the disciples of Jesus. They were to be forced to decide for or against a great and apparently losing cause; they were compelled in the interests of truth and love and loyalty, and against fearful odds, to elect to do their duty; and, in a few brief hours they must submit, under circumstances of extremest anguish, to part with the best of friends. Christ was going,—leaving them as regarded the old conditions of accustomed familiar life; their faith and love must be strained to the utmost; He was revealing some of the infinite meanings of that sorrow and that parting, of which the full meaning could only be known in the illuminating teaching of the coming Comforter, won to them by the merits of the Cross. What was *one*

lesson to be taught them now, though only afterwards fully to be understood? The answer is, the hard conditions of the Mystery of Peace.

II.

That mystery for them, for us, could be clearly shown by teaching two truths.

First, the Lord brought out to them, as seen in the fact of His conflict, the meaning of the outer life of the Christian. That outer life, so it appeared, was to take its meaning and derive its trial from antagonism with one overwhelming power. Quite as appalling, quite as prevailing now to us as then to them, that power whose fury effected the Crucifixion, that power whose deadliness the Holy Spirit should reveal in clearness by explaining afterwards the enmity that elevated the Cross; that power was "the world."

"In *the world* ye shall have tribulation.'

What did He mean? First, He meant the existence of a real power, an active temper in the wills and desires of fallen men, arising from obstinate adhesion to principles derived from exclusive regard to the visible order of things, and shaped according to rules and objects limited by the grave. He meant the potency of accumulated human habits of thought and intention which of set purpose shut out all reckoning with Eternity

He meant the virulence of human determinations deliberately and insolently ignoring or defying God.

Hence there lay before the Christian, if he had strength to be a Christian, strength to defy this arrogance, and oppose this impertinent assumption, a long and necessary course of trial. To the followers of Christ there was to be wear and tear, fret and worry, weariness and anxiety, and what men would be sure to call folly and failure owing to their dissent from the *dicta* of "the world." So it was with Christ, so it must be with His followers. Let this be distinctly understood. *He* makes the worst of mistakes to the end of time who fancies that the outer life of the follower can be different in essence from that of his Master. In proportion to his loyalty, in that proportion will he find in "the world" "tribulation."

Does he imagine that in following his Master he has "the promise of the life to come as well as of the life that now is," in such a sense as to escape the cross, he makes a grave mistake. The promise indeed is true, but only because the transforming principles of a better life possess the mind, and enable it to see and to embrace the blessed fruits of sorrow unknown, unused, except by the child of God; but the actual sorrow is there.

"In the world ye shall have tribulation" is a necessary teaching of the Cross. But then—such is the illuminating revelation of the Resurrection under the

interpreting energy of the Spirit of God—the "tribulation" is turned to excellent uses. Trial is the school of obedience; trial is the means of the growth of character; trial is the method of discipline; trial is the training of faith. There is this sad fact of the outer life of the Christian; but the silence of the winter world witnesses to the coming life of spring; the narrow wrapping of the narrow bud witnesses to the opening flower; the dark night witnesses to the morning; the outer struggle of the Christian witnesses to the Inner Life.

III.

The Inner Life! Here we are in the realm of mystery, that is, the world of eternal fact. The inner life is the life of the Christian "*in Christ.*" The phrase is remarkable. It is found in effect everywhere in the New Testament; it is common to Christ in His discourses, to St. Peter, to St. Paul. It is found in no religion except in the religion of the Incarnate. It is that "touch of" the supernatural "that makes the whole world" of Christianity "kin;" it hints of the blessed union of Christ with His humblest servant; it summarizes the work of the Holy Spirit; it reminds of the power whereby in the Incarnation God makes Himself an inward gift; it teaches that the true life of the creature is in a world of eternal splendour, is in a

sphere where the constant *differentia* is—union with God. The Christian may have, *must* have, an outer life in the world, of training, toning, educating—in fact, of "tribulation;" but with equal certainty he has a true life, an inner life, "in Christ."

And what is the prevailing character of that inner life? what is *this* fruit of the Passion?

Truly it admits of many degrees; for light is light from the first faint ray of carmine that shoots with unmeasured swiftness behind the mountains, all round the eastern sky, on to the fullest blaze of glory that bathes the basking world of noonday in the delicious languor of a dream. But the essence is the same. Light is light. The character of the inner life—as of the majestic life of the Eternal even in His Passion—is this, "in Me ye may have Peace."

Examine, then, some of the conditions of the Mystery of Peace.

And think, I have called it (and rightly, have I not?) a mystery. It is no mere acquiring the right of rest by the sacrifice of principle, it is no mere buying of freedom from disturbance at any price, it is no mere "making a solitude" and "calling it Peace." No, it is an inner condition of soul realized, and blessed; and that it may be ours some conditions must be fulfilled. What are they?

Well, first, we plainly need the forgiveness of sin. For a time men may ignore sin, for a time they may

even deny its existence as a serious fact; but in the long run—so clear is the chasm between the human sense of possible goodness and its actual achievement—in the long run, it is impossible not to feel its weight. Ah, who can tell the pressure and the trouble of remembered, haunting sin? or the galling chain of habitual evil, of sin known, realized, hated, yet practised and allowed? Life becomes as oppressive as a nightmare, as full of recurring trouble as the day that follows a night of bad and vexing dreams. To create a *concordat* between the conscience and the will must be done if *this* is to pass away. Sin must be forgiven; its weight removed; its tormenting sense of ever-reviving power attenuated; the wear and tear of its memories softened and relieved by penitential tears. This is a possibility of supernatural life; this is a result, a blessed outcome of life "in Christ." Do not lie down under the weight of unrepented sin, or the enemy may leave you to the lethargy of despair; no! gather the forces to oppose.

The traveller in the Rocky Mountains in winter, or the glacial regions of the upper Alps, suffers at first, but then afterwards is numbed into weariness and unresisting languor by the biting cold. The rocks are rough, the snow is wearying, the blast is piercing, the mist is chill. Why struggle on? To lie and sleep is at last a grim and strong temptation; but if he sleep he finds in the enveloping snowdrifts his winding-sheet and his grave.

So in sin. Resistance, the onward march of a strug-

gling soul, the yearning towards, the crying for, the seeking after forgiveness, these are needed; then then—for Christ is unfailing in His promise—it is the peace, the real rest of the weary, not the stillness and lethargy of decay.

2. Again, there are who are scarcely sensible of any prominent or deadly sin. They are not frightened by the phantom, for they are not conscious of having done the wrong. None the less in many such there is a life "heavy laden;" sooner or later they are the victims of perpetual *ennui*. Think of the weight of trouble, and the indefinable yet appreciable sense of dejection, which at least at times, possesses souls who are active, striving, vigorous, business-like in all things *except* in the things of God. Wealth, or promotion, or reputation, or success, may have their place in some lives as legitimate, if subordinate, objects of desire. But in the inner world of thought and feeling, when the beat of Time is heard no more, when the great still certainty of Eternity is *felt*, felt in moments of crisis or calm; felt when the sun is setting, and out of the crowd you sit alone by the lonely shore; felt when the house is quiet, and you stare with sleepless eyes into the darkness, and your life is forced back upon its springs—then all that comes of this world is seen to be insufficient for the immortal spirit; and "first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" is known to be a condition of peace.

Brethren, it is possible—if only the habit of worldly

energy is fostered by a life surrendered to external exertion, without the earnest activity of an inner life of communion and prayer—it is possible to dim the sense of an unending future, to blunt the sharp impression of duty, to grow at last *possessed* with an unrestful and anxious craving, never satisfied. To such souls Peace is a stranger. But, believe me, when the supernatural life is maintained by grace, through sacrament and prayer; when the soul is learning to act in *this* life on the principles of another; to stand, so to speak, a head and shoulders above mere earthly aims; to seek—whatever be its *outer* toil—to seek in the inner life after God; to live, to move, to work, in fact, "in Christ;" *then* like the consistent calmness of the sunlight on the quiet summer day, *then* like the majesty of stillness in the unfathomed azure of the summer night—*then* there is Peace.

3. Brethren, as a condition of peace we must surrender an attractive principle and adopt one at least apparently severe. It is natural, but it is perilous, to take as a guiding principle the wish to please ourselves. That we *shall* find the loftiest pleasure ourselves if we do our duty in the widest sense of that great word, is Christ's promise, and is proved by the lives of the best of men. But it is a truth that "looking at things only in the point of view of happiness and pleasure obscures our notion of their relative importance." What we want is "the thought of life as directed upon other views

than this conscious thought of the happiness of it, . . . either simply natural views . . . or mere ideal views—the higher interests of the human race, the glory of God." Happiness to us will thus mean the degree in which we are able to succeed in these things, and to bear want of success "with patience." That is, in fact (throwing it into the most definite language of spiritual life), as Christ "pleased not Himself," so in living union with Him must we live like Him. The deep danger of an unsubdued will, of misdirected, undisciplined desire, is that these powers in an undying spirit fix it on things of a dying world, and hence destroy the harmony of the soul, its inner perfection, that is, its interior peace. To have this treasure, this so fair, so needed, we must be freed from a tyrannous and trembling anxiety to please ourselves.

Repentance, resistance to sin, a mind lifted in loving and eager thoughts to eternal things, a desire, disciplined and away from mere self-pleasing; these, surely these are conditions of the peace of the inner life.

IV.

Brethren, that remarkable phrase in which the Lord describes the sphere of a Christian's supernatural activity, reminds us also of the means of attaining peace. "In Christ"! "The peace of God" is not a merely

negative condition, it is a positive gift. It is for this reason that in one passage the Apostle urges the redeemed soul, to "let" it "rule in" the "heart." What, then, is comprised of means or assistance to its attainment in this remarkable phrase?

1. Well, first, we are led to it by Christ's example.

It is only to repeat what has been the often-felt, often-asserted truth to say, that there was an individuality, and yet a universal power and moral harmony, about that example which makes Christ, apart from all other possible witness to His claims, in His life a standing miracle.

The sweet, the deep, the transparent *sincerity*, the indisputable and evident fact that all He said and did represented *Himself* precisely as He was—the large, the generous, the abundant *goodness*, the love of all that was right and beautiful, and kind and true, *and* the love of man, so that to do others good seemed His one joy, His one desire—the calm, unshaken *fearlessness*, the union of keen sensibilities, and a nature sensitive to everything human of pleasure or of pain; this, without even the faintest touch of personal fear, or the least variation from the allotted path from motives of personal regard; above all, the felt but restrained possession of *power*, evidently unbounded, yet never used for mere display, nay, held in check by the most unfaltering determination; these, with a grace of manner (if one may dare to say so), the sweet gentleness, the

light and tender meekness, evident in every line of the Gospels—these make the picture of our Most Holy Redeemer to this day unique, overwhelming, attractive as none other in the world.

But what is strange and what is blessed is this: *so universal* is the example of Christ it *can* be imitated, not indeed in perfection, but certainly in principle.

My brothers, a life guided by the pattern of that example is a life sanctified, glorified by the "Peace of God."

2. But man has ever felt, must ever feel the solemn sense of his entire unworthiness, his fear in approaching a holy God. There is no rest for the creature while that fear remains. How to remove it? The answer embraces *the* mystery of Revelation—by the fact of Atonement, by the merits of the Passion. Whatever be the exact meaning of that stupendous marvel, this is certain, it is by the Atonement of the Redeemer, and by this alone, that we have *the* needed help for every soul among us—the forgiveness of sins. "Through faith in His Blood" there is peace.

3. This is not all. The soul attains its higher, its harmonious life not only by forgiveness, but by growth in grace. Peace is in Eternal Life; and "this is Life Eternal to know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent."

To be "in Christ" is to be a Christian. It is our share in the organic supernatural life of the Church,

which is the important part in the being and the growth of the soul. Sacramental union—that close, that blessed bond—the union of love, the union of prayer, a life in the full delight of communion with God in Jesus Christ, *this* is a *sine qua non* for the fulness of peace. "*In Me* ye might have peace."

My friends, we have heard of the calm of the Indian summer. We have *felt* hours of stillness in the chequered tossing light and shadow of the leaf-entangled forest in the quiet days of opening spring. We have listened to the drowsy hum of bees in early summer in the fragrant sweetness of the swaying limes. We have known a sense of rest from weariness in the measured march of soothing music, or the rise and fall of the heaving sea. Silent nights have fallen upon us with unearthly calm after the restlessness of a weary day; the fret and trouble of the working hours have sunk to stillness before the evening breezes, and beneath the light of stars. Moments of quiet, whispers of rest! But these are external *touches* from nature or from man, sweet and consoling, comforting and tender. Not these, not these, are the end of the soul's desire; not even "the rest that remaineth," nor only the calmness of the grave. No, the creature is yearning for the one real blessedness, certainly in Eternity, nay, even here.

The ground of that one real blessedness is a well-founded trust in Him to Whom he owes himself, his life, his all; and the blessedness consists in an unbroken,

a sustained communion with the Ever Blessed, with the Living God.

This blessedness may be ours. Nay, for us baptized Christians, unless we neglect or wilfully forget it, it *is*. To do right, to hate sin, to live in the effort to rise to a high ideal, to put aside base motives and resist the temptations of self-interest and the allurements of sense, to be honest and straightforward, considerate and kindly, tender and strong; to keep before the mind with increasing determination and consistency, as a ruling principle, the resolve to do our duty, the desire to please God; to recognise the needs of others, to admit the imperial demands of responsibility in the work of every day, but not to be insensible to the claims of the Unseen in our own inner life; this, my brother, this requires the heart of a man, of a Christian; for this is needed grace, for this is needed Christ. The result in this outer world, be sure, is plenty of trouble, plenty of disappointment, plenty of self-sacrifice, in fact, plenty of "tribulation;" but in the inner life it is Peace.

My friends, I make two remarks as I close.

First, to seek for Peace, which is found in the life of faith in Christ, is no act of spiritual selfishness; for it is only in proportion as we are in harmony with God's revelations and demands within us, that we can hope to help other souls. For sake of others by whom your help is needed, for sake of a world sin-darkened, sorrow-laden, live "in Christ," and be at peace.

And again, once resting in God, thy rest need not, no, it need not be broken. Of course there must be frailty; of course faults are only gradually overcome; of course we have perplexities; of course we are subject to sorrow; but the penitent soul, maintaining its union with Christ in sacrament and prayer, the brave soul striving honestly, faithfully to do its duty, the persevering soul labouring, it may be laboriously, still to go on, cannot fail to realize, cannot fail to rejoice in the blessing of God's Peace.

SERMON X.

THE REVELATION OF THE MYSTERY

The Revelation of the Mystery.

"Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him."—REVELATION i. 7.

ST. JOHN is speaking in the language of ancient prophecy. His words sound like an echo from Daniel's vision, but in fact they are no mere echo, they are the plain unhesitating statement of a revelation at first hand.

Whatever else *in detail* is meant to be taught by the whole of this marvellous volume, one thing is evident, that *in general* it deals with the most solemn and mysterious fact of the universe—the great conflict. That conflict has raged for unnumbered centuries. It is raging still. In single souls, in vast multitudes, on a small stage, on a boundless battle-field, with many actors, and confused and varying views and motives, and different degrees of guilt, and various measures of failure and success—the conflict between good and evil.

Every truth in the Apocalypse, in a specially intimate sense, touches that. Of course such is the case with every religious writing, and especially every book

of the Bible (for *this* battle is *the* fact of facts, *the* mystery of mysteries); but perhaps one is not far wrong in saying that elsewhere different sections of the battle-field are observed, special directions given, immediate duties enforced; but in the Revelation a broad view is taken, the whole field surveyed, the darkness which envelops a part of it, for the moment swept away, and human eyes allowed to peer into the mystery of iniquity, and the majesty and sorrow of righteousness and truth; and taking so wide a view, the writer seems to sketch in dim colour a philosophy of the subject, to dive into deep causes, to ascend to ultimate issues.

Anyhow, here in the text is a solemn warning and a strong support; here on the threshold of so tremendous a subject the *crisis* is succinctly, unfalteringly stated. Christ is coming. "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him."

This is a truth of the faith; and St. John corroborates Daniel, not because he imitates the prophetic spirit by echoing prophetic phrase, but because *each* prophet stands on a mountain peak of Revelation, and surveys an unalterable fact. For the mind to grow into the force of that fact is one of the most necessary methods of advance in the Spirit and will of God. And the teaching here, while touching the fate of a universe, is, like everything in Christianity, strictly individual. It unites the teachings of the Church's

two most solemn seasons—the Advent and Passiontide. It teaches us of two great subjects—of ourselves and of Christ.

I.

Now, first; St. John is speaking in the language of a *seer*, which is the real language of man's immortal life. His words are a cry of relieved tension of feeling, of suddenly fulfilled expectation; like the watcher from Athens catching sight of the corn-ships as they doubled Sunium; like the anxious gazer descrying in the distance the British flag which announced approaching relief to the beleaguered sufferers in Lucknow; like the dying man straining the ear through the silent night for the first footfall of one he loves, and longs to see before he dies; so St. John, gazing into the mysterious distances of the unfolding destinies of man, descries the crisis of the combat, the beginning of the end, the breaking of the dawn, and cries to the human race around him, "Behold, He is coming with clouds; and every eye shall see Him."

This, I say, is the real language of man's immortal life; or, in other words, we are taught that in relation to the return of the Redeemer the soul has no long waiting. Ordinarily we imagine it to be very different. There are few who do not paint before them imaginary pictures of long vistas of years: *these* are to be spent in

unreality, or carelessness, or sin; but *then* of course a preparation will be made for the end. Is not this the ordinary habitual view of many? Now, to correct this, to grow into truer conceptions of duty, to increase in the knowledge of God, we must learn to realize more accurately what is the scale of comparison of an undying life.

Man expresses his sense of relation to objects and persons external to himself by two names—Time and Eternity. These names of course represent real ideas. These ideas are dim and vague enough. Man's thought of the mysteries of his life is limited; he cannot escape from himself; he must carry into the revelation of another world his own forms of expression, his own crude ideas, inadequate as they are. Time commonly to him represents one mode of his relation to what is outside himself, which holds while he lives this side the grave; Eternity is taken to represent that relation as conceived of beyond the barrier of death: in the one there is the idea of a sense of succession terminating at last, in the other a sense of succession with the addition of endlessness. Surely he has to learn that Time is "a phantom of succession;" that *he* himself, not Time, is moving on; that now his life is partially developed; surely he has to realize that Eternity can include no sense of succession, but represents life as fully possessed.

For in his trial state man is trained by contact with external things, but he must not yield to the tempta-

tion of frittering away his energies on them: realizing *himself*, his immortality, his relationship to the Undying, he emerges from the delusive dreams of distant years, from the habits of delay, from the false and deceiving imagination that *any* evil acts in an eternal being are matters of indifference and end where they begin. He cannot grasp Eternity, but he can, may be, disentangle himself from the chains of Time, and weigh things in the balance of God. He learns to feel with Apostles, that if the crisis of Christ's coming be still deferred for what we call centuries, yet even so, in relation to an event like that, which belongs to an eternal category, the soul has no long waiting; that event is before it as a present power; like St. John, it is looking out, catching the first glimpse of the dawn, pointing by its true life to the approaching vision, crying, "Behold, He cometh."

We must learn in the things of the soul to weigh and measure by the scales, by the standard of Eternity, for we are immortal. Speaking, then, as we should speak, with a sense of our full, our endless life, the close of the great conflict is not far off.

2. And again, to each one of us there shall be a full consciousness of the Coming and the Presence of the Lord. It is difficult, almost impossible, to imagine, but the fact is revealed with precision, "Every eye shall see Him."

What is the function of the eye? The eye is the

watch-tower of the human spirit, whither it ascends to view God's universe. The eye is the instrument by which impressions from the objects of an outer world, impressions of colour and harmony and form, are conveyed to the lonely soul. Beautiful, changeful, complex are the visions so conveyed; waking within the soul varying feelings, sad or happy memories, joyous and gladdening thoughts; storing it with sweet or awful recollections, powerful, long after the actual sight, to solemnize or soothe. The eye can only *convey* the message, the power to *use* it is in the soul itself.

How quick the message comes, and how completely! Evening by evening the sun sinks westering behind the crowded city roofs, or curtained by the distant mountains or receding sea, but how many sunsets have fixed themselves in our memories with different message! It was not the fact merely that the eye conveyed, it was the mystery of *expression*. Even in nature this is seen; the final momentary results of many crossing lights and shadows; but far deeper, far more solemn is the message conveyed by that mysterious power upon a human face.

What is expression? Expression is the last-recorded mark upon the face of many changeful workings of the inner life; expression from another face carries to each of us dim yet visible records of character, results of the intercourse of a living spirit with an unseen world, recorded in tangible characters in this. The eye conveys this mysterious message. By its power we are placed

in the closest relationship with the feelings and temperament of others, and the shades of change in nature, because it is the instrument of a subtle sense, and "things seen are greater than things heard." Let the eye be dimmed or closed, and the soul carries indeed the memory, but not the sharp consciousness of actual *expression* of other faces, or of the visible world.

I stood by a dying bed one fair June morning. Life had not swept the shadows of twenty winters across the large brown eyes, had not traced the wrinkles of a score of years on the fair forehead of that young creature who lay there dying fast. He had known many joys, perhaps not the keenest, few sorrows, and only the lightest, but the joy of *life* he knew, and he was beginning to taste the bitterness of death. It was a fair June morning. The air was rich in sights and sounds of summer. The stream was babbling of coolness to warm winds that brushed its waters; deep green foliage of the stately beech woods glanced and gleamed in the sunlight; a thrush in a bough near the room of death, carrying his tuneful dream of spring on into the invaded silence of the summer, tossed and trilled his mystic song along the morning breeze; great clusters of roses poured their fragrance through the opened window, and floods of summer sunlight were streaming in: outside it was all life, and light, and beauty; and inside that sad, sad spectacle—Death on a summer morning. It was near the end when he called to us, "Light, light. I cannot

see, open the window, it grows so dark." Alas! there was light all round him, but the eye had lost its power.

My friends, it would seem that the human soul has a strong likeness to the poor frail human body. Living, though sick with sin, it is conscious, in a dreamlike consciousness, of the Presence and claims of God; if life is failing in it, if the disease of sin is settling into spiritual death, it loses that consciousness. But one thing is certain: the hour is coming when each of us—with a consciousness of soul as clear as the sight of the eye of the body—when each of us shall see the fairest, the most awful vision, the coming Christ! Here we see but dimly; *there* will be the full revelation.

It is, my brothers, a solemn thought how various may be the effects of that vision. The *effects* on any soul of impressions brought by the eye from the outer world of nature are due to the condition of the mind. The same or similar causes, under the same conditions, will effect the same results. Ah, but change the conditions, how all is changed! You looked on some fair scene one summer evening years ago; true, it *was* fair, but how much fairer *then* than now! And yet, the same hill crowned with whispering pines, the same gay garden beds, the same bright sun, the same soft evening breezes; alas! what is the difference? You have awakened from a dream, the same, yet not the same. It is *you* who have changed, your soul is old in sorrow, used to trouble, weary with labour, descended from the

peaks of dreamland to the dead level of a commonplace and struggling life. The effect of the same sight is now to sadden, which once could only give you joy.

The sight of Christ in His coming will be clear to all. But the effect, how different! As the time is near, and we must live in a serious recollection of that truth, as the sight of Him will be plain to each quickened conscience, so there may be "fulness of joy in His presence," nay, there *will* be, if now the soul is trained in penitence, in watchfulness, in love, in that quiet serious sense of the claim of duty, and the blessedness and need of prayer, which comes from and in turn quickens the sense of the Presence, the blessed Presence of God.

My friends, in short words the plain truth is this. To love to do His will *now*, is to learn *then* "to love His appearing."

II.

In gazing on the prophetic vision which represents to us the close of the great combat, our attention has been fixed on the individual soul. Its time of waiting is, by reason of its place in Eternity, short; with full and clear and personal consciousness it sees and recognises the King in His coming; the effect of that recognition will depend upon its condition of life, and thought, and feeling, and affection. And now, following the soul in

this its last crisis of destiny, we are brought face to face with Him Whose appearing shall be the interpretation of all dreams, the solution of all perplexing problems, "Behold, He is coming with clouds."

1. Now, first, St. John's account of the pageant of Christ's appearing is an appeal to an instinct of Humanity face to face with Nature. Of all the varied forms of feeling which in different degrees belong to every human being, and by different objects are wakened up into activity in all, there is none which more largely partakes of a strange pleasure and a strange pain than the sense of awe; it is a loadstone within us which answers to a magnet; it is a force which compels us to succumb to a fascination; it is stirred by the presence of some witness to power and majesty beyond our control. It is like the white morning mist that tracks the course of the hidden stream; it draws its strength *from* and witnesses to the existence *of* that half-acknowledged sense in each of us of dim regions of mystery within, veiled by the ordinary facts of every day; of unfathomed depths of evil, undiscerned possibilities of goodness; of man's half-suspected greatness and littleness; of his half-perceived relations to an awful and a holy God; of the lights and darks of his inexplicable nature, and the possible splendour of his unimagined end.

Of all natural objects that awaken the sense none can rival for power, mountains, clouds, and sea. But clouds combine, in a measure, the resources of sea and

mountains; smoothed out at dawn or sunset, twisted into strange contortions by the storm, they rival the solemnity of mountains in their vast proportions, and imitate in their changeful movements the beating of the waves. They speak to all, to the seafaring man and the inland labourer; to the mountain climber and the dweller on the plains. Black as forces of evil, bright with the smile of opening day, floating on the surface of an azure heaven, or piled in giant waves above the mountains with a look of doom. Everywhere they give the sense of thinly veiled depths of mystery yet to be revealed, and of the wrath and power of God against human sin.

When Christ comes, then, this is certain, He will come revealing "hidden things of darkness," ay! and hidden things of light. It will be a time of unveiling. But more: He will come in the fully manifested display of God's irreconcilable antagonism to human sin. It will be a moment of startling and complete revelation.

A day of unveiling. Dark backgrounds in works of the greatest masters serve to add dignity, to throw out the delicate lines of beauty and the exquisite imperceptible shades of colour. "With clouds"! These clouds shall now no longer cover; they are only the foils for the clear and undreamed-of sunlight, they are thrown back, they are conquered, they support for the gaze of human consciousness the exquisite majesty of "the Light of the world."

And they symbolize the massive proportions and the blackness of iniquity. Let us not forget it. It is only in our more reverent moods, only in our more intimate meditations, only at times of severer thought or special illumination, that we gain a deep though passing sense of the horror of evil. Such moments come to all. They are anticipations of the coming revelation, and to preserve by grace in our inner life some habitual remembrance and some practical consequence of such revelation is to prepare for the coming of Christ.

2. But there is a further feature, the most striking of all. It is an unexpected touch in the picture which follows—"they also that pierced Him"—a sudden allusion to the Passion.

Doubtless there is a warning in such words, that those who deride, reject, or seek to destroy the highest goodness now, shall one day see the magnitude of their madness. But this is not all. Face to face with human sin in its closing crisis, the great Representative of the race displays before assembled worlds the extent of its malignity in wounding God. Even those who have hated it most shall then for the first time vividly realize its actual dreadfulness.

And in these wounds of the Passion are exhibited the stores of the experience of human life. No teaching so deeply marks the soul, none is so permanently possessed as the teaching of experience. A part of the unspeakable condescension of our Blessed Master was seen in

this, that He willed first to bear our trials as Man, and then to retain their results for ever by the power of experience. For ever He is the Son of a human mother, for the Past is irrevocable, and what has been can never in its inherent consequences cease to be; for ever He bears with Him the strength and teachings of Calvary. Thus He is in direct relation to all, for all have pierced Him, and He has learned by experience the sorrow and sin of that humanity which is common to all.

And then we are reminded that the judgment to follow takes its force, and derives its necessity from the necessities of His nature. With the knowledge of God He comes, *and* with the feelings and experiences of Man. Here is perfect truth, therefore this *must* be judgment, for in the interests of Truth a decision between Good and Evil is needed—to judge right is to decide according to the demands of Truth; here is thorough experience, here also the symbol of mercy; there is, therefore, a certainty of real trial; there is also—however the hearts of the bravest are failing—a possibility of acquittal. For there is the evidence of a Love so deep, so real, that it hesitated at no sacrifice, because recognising man's freewill, and sin's malignity, it knew that the path of pardon could only be found by freedom through truth.

The great wail of the human family recorded in the close of the verse is its outspoken sign of recognition of The Truth. In some—His persecuting enemies—the

cry of fear and fury at the certainty of the triumph of goodness; to some undeveloped soul the anguish of a fuller recognition of that marvellous Majesty, which on earth it only recognised by a stray sigh of penitence or a passing thought of desire; to some who through no fault of their own, by a *specialité* of circumstance, or mystery of mental build, or owing to a fog of prejudice, or an involuntarily blinded mind, have never known Him—the purifying sorrow of awakening at last to the unveiled beauty; to some who have known and loved Him, the fuller sense—for love is the real illumination—of how unworthy they have been, how their best has been bad, their self-sacrifices pitiful, face to face with the unshrouded loveliness of *that* supernatural sorrow.

III.

What then, what—that is the question—is the relation of that final vision with the Mystery of the Passion? This: in that supreme crisis of humanity it is a *mystery* no more; or rather the souls of those who are passing from the limitations of Time are themselves in a sphere of mystery; they see, they understand such visions with the quickened senses of Eternity.

Certainly—and we must not forget it—the "wail of the tribes of the earth" strikes a solemn discord, and

reminds us of necessary and terrible consequences of unrepented sin. But, gazing at this unveiling of the triumph of the Passion, the discord is resolved to a heavenly harmony in the countless multitude of the redeemed. Redeemed, persevering, perfected, what shall we see?

Brethren, the thoughts which come in answering such a question are, may be, powerful incentives to help us to persevere. Life here is in deepest shadow, but nothing, nothing since the beginning of creation has been so wrapped in shadow as the fact and the consequences of Calvary; if that be clear, *all* must be plain. And clear it will be. And with it all those inscrutable mysteries so closely related to the Passion of the Redeemer which crowd around our passing footsteps as we march across the isthmus of life. These will be seen unveiled, unclouded in the full vision of the coming Christ. Christ is the Great Revealer, in Him we shall see all.

What shall we see? This. The real meaning of Humility. The strange and now interpreted story of the Humiliation of the Cross.

What shall we see? The perfected sympathy of God in Christ with all that is truly human, all that would permit that sympathy by a surrendered will. The sympathy of Christ! The great thought which gives the creature confidence in view of that last assize.

What shall we see? The evident and now intelligible splendour of the ideal of humanity. The boy Donatello

is said, when he saw the crucifix carved in perfection by the genius of his friend, to have been speechless with a glad self-forgetting surprise. But, oh! the surprise of the souls of the blessed, even after they had meditated on "the Man of Sorrows" in this "valley of the shadow," even after they had held with Him their calm and sweet communion in "the rest that remaineth"—their glad, their overwhelming, their speechless surprise when first they see unveiled in awe and majesty the ideal of Divine, of Human beauty—the Fairest of the fair!

What shall we see? The meaning of suffering. It seemed awful, almost cruel, when borne in the darkness of probation, but here is the end. In the Light of the Crucified now in unshrouded beauty, the full splendour of that suffering once borne with difficulty, but borne in patience, will reveal what, in "the valley of the shadow," lay concealed within it—some inconceivable secret of the love and the loveliness of God.

What shall we see? The meaning of sorrow. The exquisite pathos, the consoling and spiritual secrets unfolded by God's mysterious tenderness, in the purifying pangs of the tribulation of His people.

What shall we see? For the first time the *real* loveliness of those whom on earth we "loved and lost." Once we admired them, delighted to be with them, rejoiced in their kindness, basked in their affection, clung to them as our supporting blessings, or stayed them up with

the enduring effect of our sustaining strength. They were each a ray from God's own sunlight given to us, lent to us in our march through the night; their absence was a felt, a penetrating darkness; for years we remembered and mourned for them, long after our first hot tears had fallen on their graves. Now we see them, see them in their real beauty, in the light of the loveliness of that once suffering, now conquering Redeemer, Whose unbounded merits, Whose unfathomable grace, Whose propitiating sufferings had made them what they are.

What shall we see? The inner senses of that tremendous sacrifice, once half guessed, dimly imagined, now known as the one adequate expression of the joy of the universe—the love of God. Words fail to express, as thought fails to travel to the perfection of the Redeemed.

What shall we see? We shall see in its overwhelming glory the mystery of Power. It could only speak on earth in the mystic but eloquent symbol of the Cross. Here it is plain in the clear Revelation. Power elevating, perfecting the uncreated beauty. The power that could deal with the ruin of the creature, the Redeemed the work of the Redeemer, the forces of Redemption—God in Christ.

Brethren, He is coming with the completed resources of His Passion; coming to be adored of His saints, and admired of them that believe. On earth we wondered at the rapture, at the boldness of Apostles, now we understand at last that the "light afflictions" lasting out earth's

"moment" were indeed not worthy to be compared to the "Glory" to be "revealed."

Revealed. Yes; what we want is that revealing. It is coming through the forces won and stored in the Passion. Christ crucified—revealing God, judging sin, perfecting holiness—is coming: the Light of the world is dawning; "every eye shall see Him." "There shall be no night there."

Brothers and sisters, let us look to that day with a sense of awe indeed, deep and serious, to strengthen in times of temptation, and to sustain in our conflict with sin. But let us also look onward to that day with a prayer for increased and increasing desire that we may have grace to "love His appearing." Very gradually He trains us, but, dear Lord, if we allow Him, train us He does.

We are weak and helpless, but He is mighty; our hearts are failing, but He is strong. Our sins scare and overwhelm us, but He died to redeem. Certainly we have "pierced Him;" and *then* we shall see it. But, O fainting soul, to be "pierced" though in glory is the mark for us of His real, His consoling kinship. "Behold and *see*," He says, "that it is I Myself; I am He that liveth, and *was dead*."

"These dear tokens of His Passion" remind us in our penitence that the Judge in His majesty is the Saviour Who died.

Brethren, in view of that day of Revelation, let us shun the sin that would separate us from His Presence,

let us cling to the merits of His all-availing sacrifice, let us seek for the holiness whereby to see God.

Ah, Blessed Master, keep us near Thee here, for *then* we cannot bear to be without Thee! Show us this life in the Light of Thy Coming; cleanse us from stains in the Fount of Thy Sorrows; bring us, soiled and struggling, to the Vision of Thy joy.

O God, make glad our souls in Thy Presence, remember not our old sins and excesses, which through the violence of anger or the heat of evil desire we have at any time committed. For although we have sinned we have not denied the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, but have believed, and have had a zeal for God, and God Who made all things have we faithfully worshipped. According to the multitude of Thy mercies, be mindful of us in the brightness of Thy glory.

O Lord Jesu Christ, Son of the living God, place Thy Cross and Passion between Thy judgment and our souls now and in the hour of our death. Amen.

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